California's Groundwater Free-for-All

california JOURNAL

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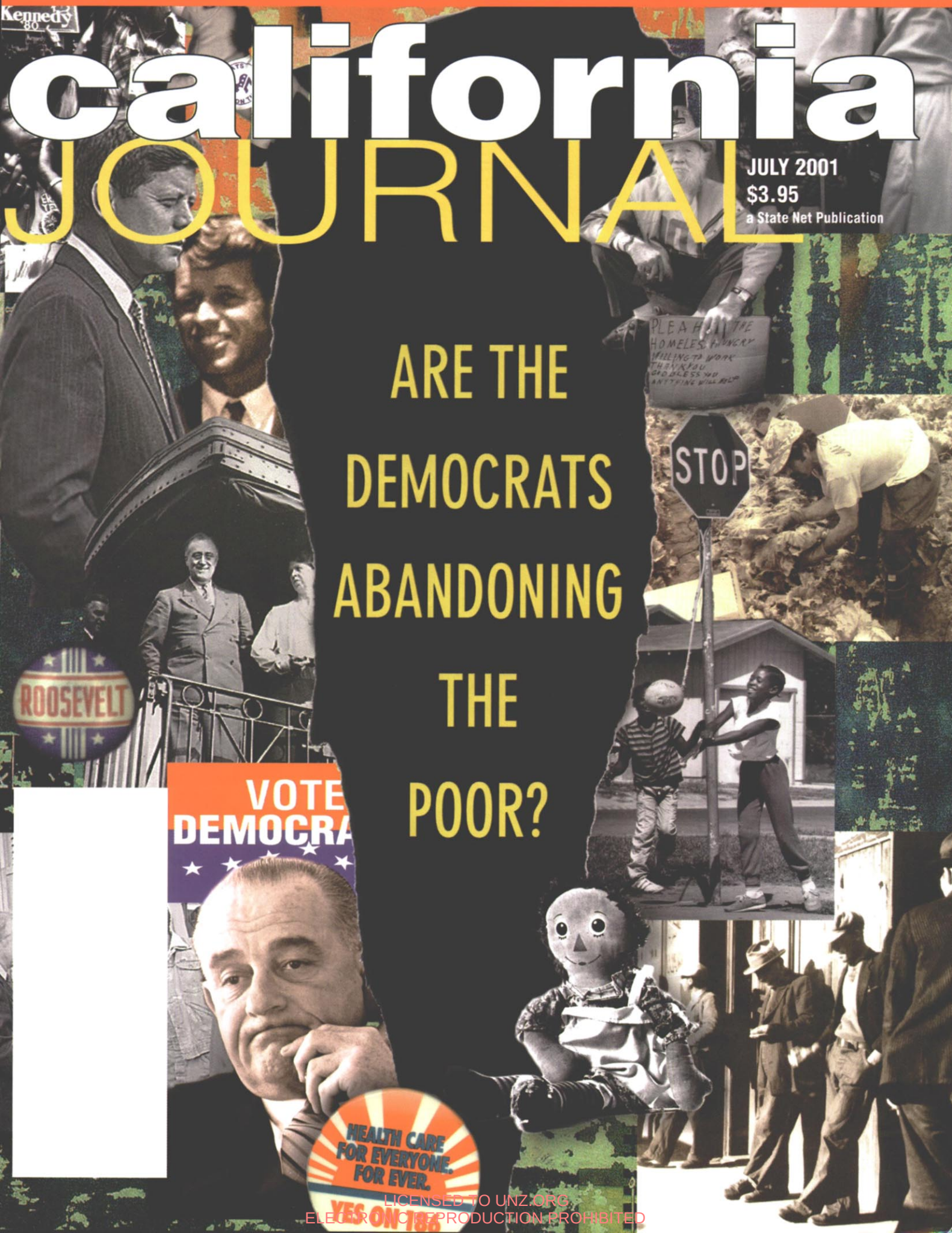
Kennedy '80
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YES ON 186

ARE THE DEMOCRATS ABANDONING THE POOR?

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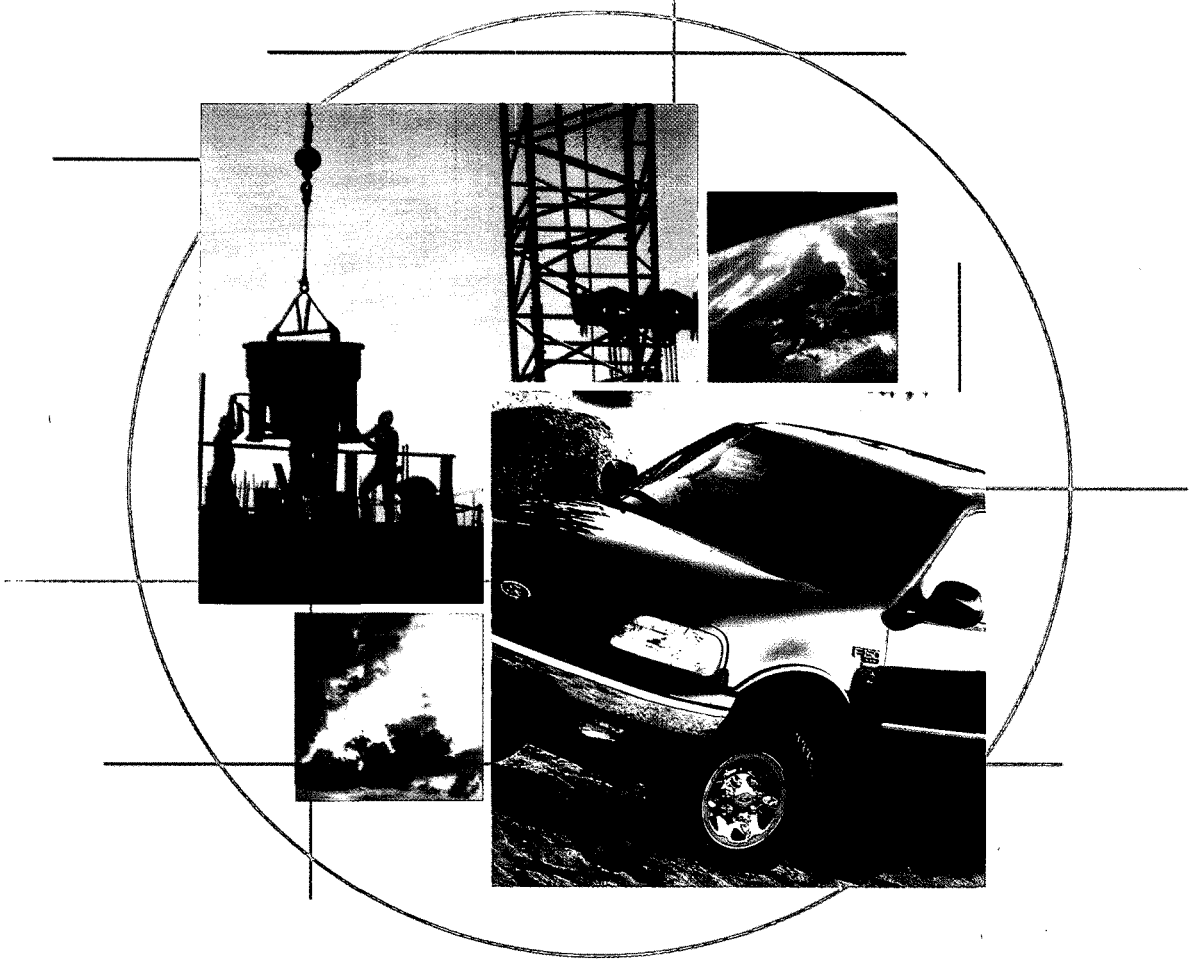

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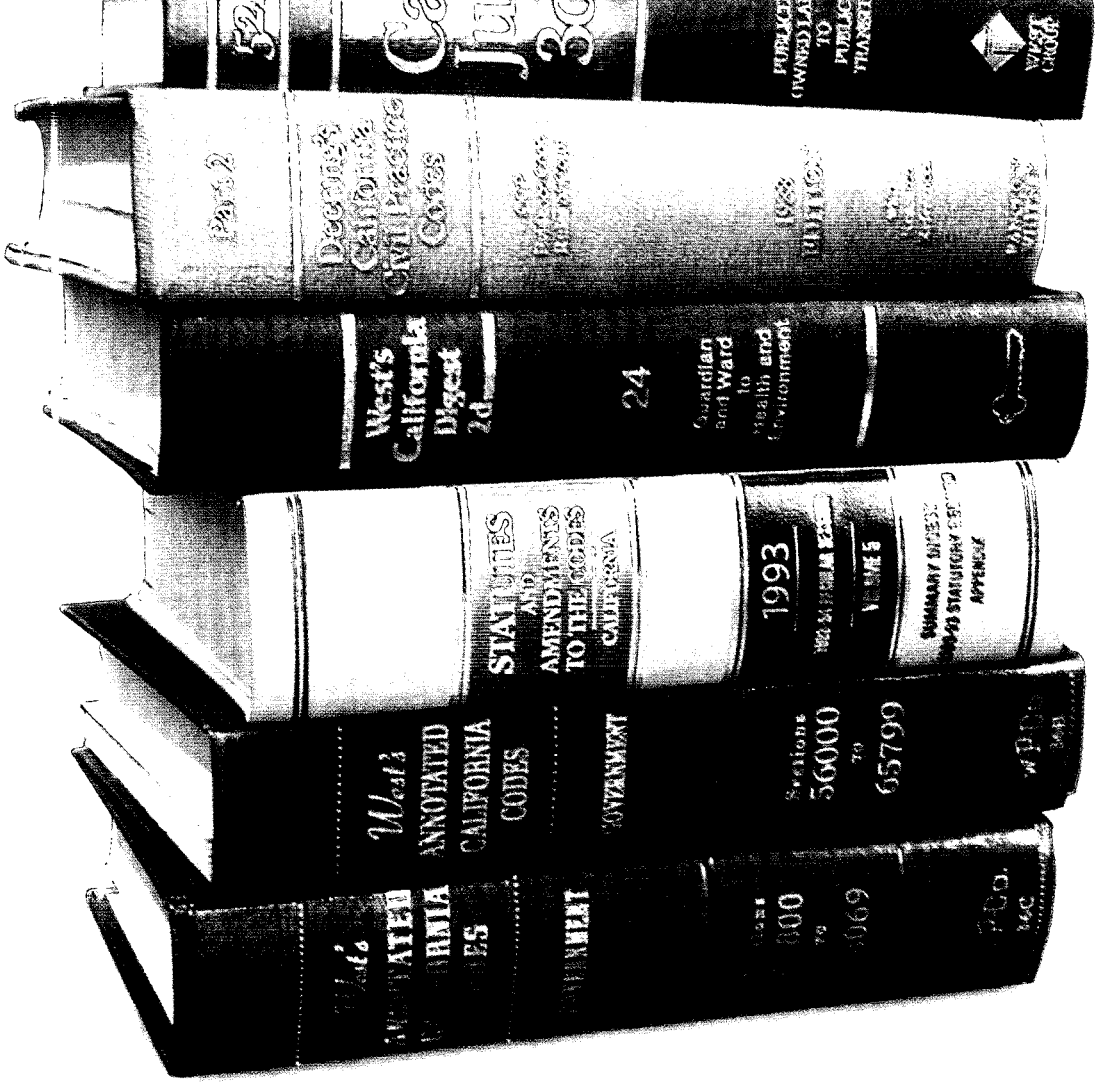

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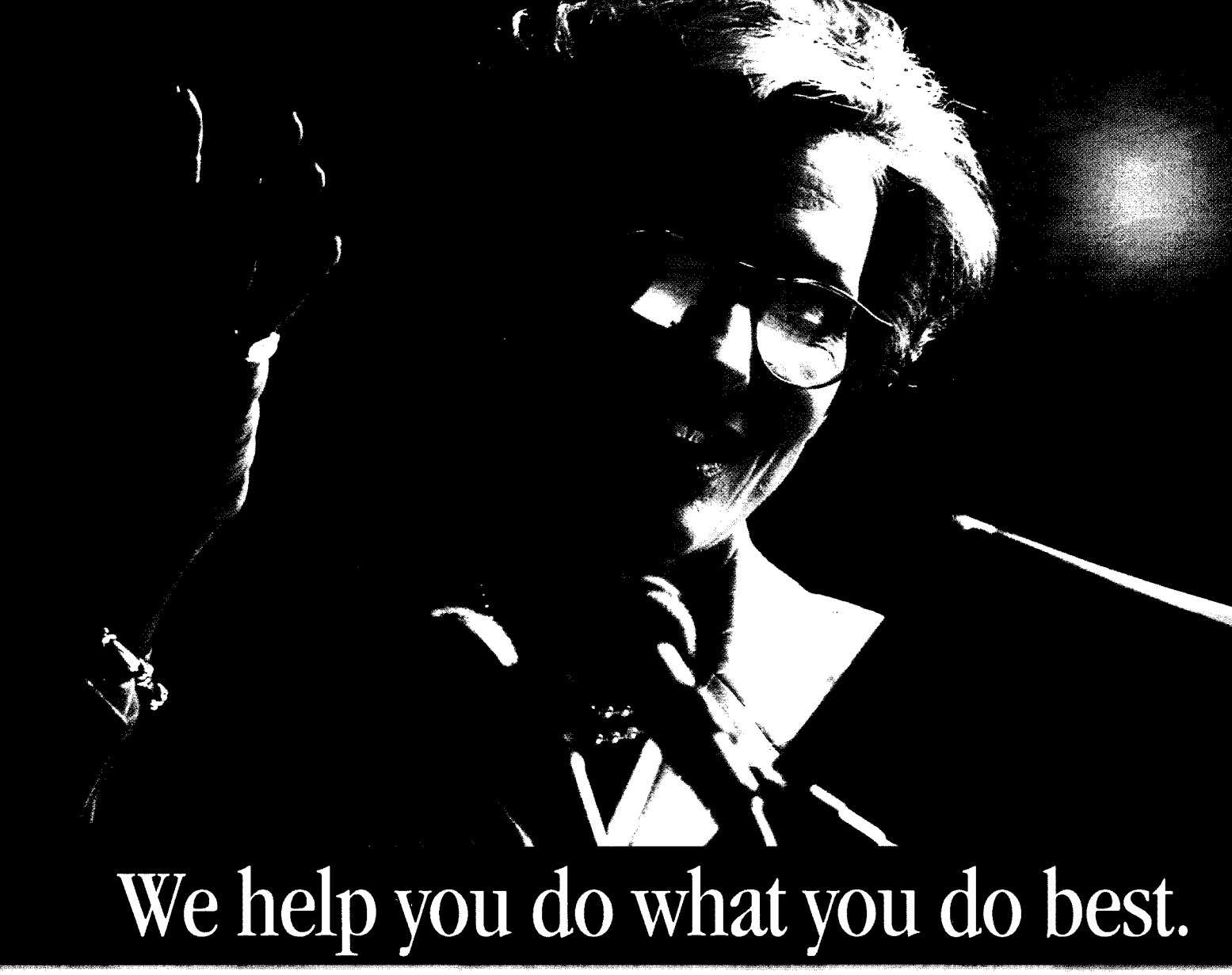

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California JOURNAL
July 2001
Volume XXXII, Number 7

Upfront
Updating Pringle; Reyes vs. Florez

Southern Exposure
Old axioms in L.A.
By Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

Talking Points
Brownfields; hats off to calvoter.com

The Bottom Line
Davis vs. Bush
By Susan Rasky

D.C. Perspective
Thelma and Louise in D.C.
By Marc Sandalow

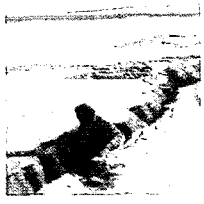
A great run

This December, *California Journal* will have completed 32 years of public-affairs journalism — a long life span for any publication but especially one focused on state government and politics. Simply put, the magazine is now better than at any time during those three-plus decades. Not only has it broken ground on such critical issues as rural health care, but its look and feel have been enhanced, with new features and graphics designed to make it more appealing to you — the reader. The vision, panache and drive that made *California Journal* what it is today are those of editor Cynthia Craft, who guided the effort to modernize and improve the magazine during her 16 months at the helm. Cynthia steps down next month to become Editor-at-Large, a position that allows her to pursue the investigative journalism she loves. Her byline will appear frequently in these pages, with articles such as her May 2001 cover story on Gray Davis' fund raising. As editor, she leaves her successor a great magazine — and a very high bar.

y A.G. Block

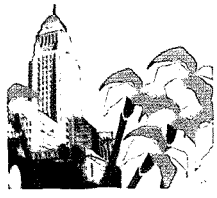
Democrats doing an about face?
Long supporters of the poor and disenfranchised, are Democrats leaving their base behind as they move to the center?
By Dana Wilkie

Groundwater blues
One of California's largest sources of water lies hidden underground without a central gatekeeper.
By Noel Brinkerhoff



Go-getter Getman
FPPC chair Karen Getman is on a crusade to streamline the rules for complying with the *Political Reform Act*.
By Cynthia H. Craft

The L.A. showdown is over
New L.A. Mayor James Hahn has his work cut out: growth, housing and secession top the list.
By Laura Mecoy



Is Harry Low swinging high enough?
California's insurance chief talks about righting his troubled agency and whether he will run in 2002.
By Emelyn Rodriguez

Curl up with a good read
This year's installment of the popular *CJ* reading list.

Cut from the same conservative cloth
Congressmen Christopher Cox and Dana Rohrabacher adeptly represent Orange County, but each in his own way.
By Dena Bunis

Cover by Dagmar Thompson

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umbrage

The dereg blues. Misery loves company, and what better way to share the collective burn of the current electrical crisis than through song. Thanks to the California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG), Californians can all sing along to vent their hearts with a rendition of "The Deregulation Blues," which can be downloaded at www.calpirg.org. The song takes special delight in mocking Governor Gray Davis and his handling of the crisis with such lines as: *"We thought the bills were high enough, but the governor wants some more. We used to just get by, but now we're destitute and poor .... But Governor Davis has a plan to save us all you see. We'll bail out those billionaires, we'll save PG&E .... Now I'm reading in my paper by candlelight alone, the governor wants more money, guess I'll sell my happy home. He wants to buy transmission lines to pacify the man, I think I'll go with solar heat for my all-acoustic band."*

Fightin' in Fresno. "Serene" is not how you'd describe the relationship between Assembly members Dean Florez (D-Shafter) and Sarah Reyes (D-Fresno). Never the best of pals, relations between the two Fresno-area representatives have soured since their state senator, Jim Costa, entered his final term in office. Reyes and Florez have been jockeying for the Democratic nomination to succeed Costa in 2002. The perception among insiders has Florez ahead, and some believe Reyes will forgo the Senate and instead vie for the Assembly speakership after Bob Hertzberg steps down. But if the two do go head-to-head, then more juicy exchanges, like this one in *The Fresno Bee*, lie ahead: (Florez) "The difference between her and I is that I display courage to take on tough issues. Sarah doesn't go beyond playing the inside game. But she's good at playing the sympathy thing. 'Big bad Dean is always doing things to me.'" (Reyes) "It appears that Dean Florez wants to get into a public fight with me. I think that says a lot about his character. If he has to make statements against me, then he must fear me in a Senate race."

Old friends. It's been three years since former Assemblyman Curt Pringle (R-Garden Grove) left the Capitol. Pringle, the one-time Assembly speaker, was a conservative who pushed for welfare reform, tax cuts and dismantling the Coastal Commission. So it came as a surprise when Pringle's name showed up in the *Orange County Business Journal* as hosting a fund raiser for an old rival — former Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Los Angeles). According to the paper, Pringle, now a consultant, brought Orange County's Republican elite to a $1,000-per-person luncheon to benefit Villaraigosa's mayoral campaign (see story, page 32). It was, said Pringle, merely an opportunity to help an old friend. "I always trusted Antonio," Pringle said, "even when we opposed each other in negotiations." It also wouldn't have hurt to have an old friend at the helm of California's largest city.

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The Hahn victory proves old truths

"Hahn Wins Mayor's Race" blared the post-election headline in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Latino Turnout Can't Carry Villaraigosa."

That simplistic statement belittles the hard-fought contest for Los Angeles mayor between City Attorney James Hahn and former Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa. No one single ethnic group — let alone a group that's just 22 percent of the electorate — could "carry" either candidate to victory in last month's run-off. The factors that shaped the race's outcome are as complex and diverse as L.A. itself. And they underscore the timelessness of a few basic political axioms.

A candidate must define himself before his opponent defines him. In 1969, when then-City Councilman Tom Bradley first challenged incumbent Mayor Sam Yorty, Yorty painted Bradley, an African-American and former cop, as "anti-police" and supported by black militants. The little-known Bradley ignored the attacks; he lost. In their 1973 rematch, Bradley was known by some 95 percent of the electorate, and Yorty's charges couldn't stick. Bradley won.

Conversely, Bill Carrick, a Hahn consultant, helped catapult Dianne Feinstein, little known beyond San Francisco, ahead of California Attorney General John Van de Kamp in the 1990 contest for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. A *positive* biographical ad aired well before the primary campaign reached fever pitch allowed Feinstein to introduce herself to voters on *her* terms — not those of her better-known opponent.

It wasn't necessary to introduce Hahn, a veteran of 20 years in local elected office and the scion of a long-serving local political dynasty (his father, Kenneth Hahn, had served south-central Los Angeles on the County Board of Supervisors for 40 years). But when the mayor's race began, Villaraigosa and his record were little known outside his former Assembly district. Hahn created doubts in the minds of voters about Antonio Villaraigosa.

The most controversial tool used was the so-called "Vignali ad." It assailed Villaraigosa for a letter he wrote to the Clinton White House supporting clemency for Carlos Vignali, a convicted drug dealer; the ad showed grainy images of Villaraigosa and a coke pipe.

Villaraigosa never directly addressed the specific charges nor could he not find a comparable countercharge. He tried to hold Hahn responsible for high liability payments paid out by the city. But Angelenos don't equate shelling out large settlements with supporting clemency for convicted drug dealers.

Endorsements provide another way by which candidates try to define themselves. But to make a dent, endorsements must resonate with voters and be used effectively. Villaraigosa won the coveted nod of Richard Riordan, Los Angeles' moderate Republican mayor, as well as support from Big Labor and the Democratic Party establishment — capped by Governor Gray Davis. Villaraigosa's commercials used both Riordan and Davis in one ad, sending mixed messages to Republicans and Democrats. Hahn, on the other hand, effectively utilized endorser Magic Johnson to energize his black base.

> When the mayor's race began, Villaraigosa and his record were little known outside his former Assembly district.

In the end, the message of this campaign *isn't* that L.A. is not ready for a Latino mayor, or that Latinos aren't sophisticated enough to elect one. It is that experience tells. Hahn had weathered five successful citywide campaigns — one for city controller and a record four for city attorney. Villaraigosa had never run citywide, and that left his campaign largely ill-equipped to handle jolts like the fallout from the Vignali ad.

This election underscores another basic axiom: Politics makes strange bedfellows. *The Times* exit poll confirmed that Hahn's plan had worked: He won with 80 percent of the black vote and hefty support from moderate-to-conservative voters of the San Fernando Valley.

Now, however, Hahn must govern these disparate constituencies, along with the city's burgeoning Latino population (82 percent of whose voters supported Villaraigosa).

"I think that people know that the campaign is over," the mayor-elect told a morning-after news conference. "We need to all build bridges toward each other."

With secession movements still brewing, police reform an intensifying issue, the schools in continued disarray and a new city charter about to redefine the civic power equation, that's a mighty tall order.

by Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

Contributing Editor Sherry Bebitch Jeffe is a senior scholar at the USC's School of Policy, Planning & Development. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

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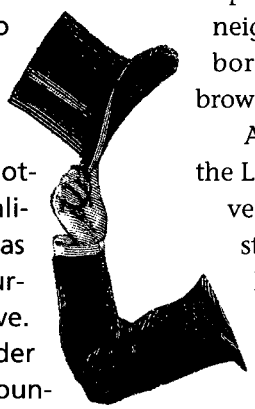
Web Rover:

Hometown gal makes good

Here today, gone tomorrow — it's an appropriate mantra for the spate of political Web sites that sprouted last year to offer voters impartial election news and information on candidates and issues. But not all the dot-coms are dot-*gone*. In California, one nonprofit site has not only managed to survive but, somehow, to thrive.



Kim Alexander, founder of the California Voter Foundation, which pioneered this state's online disclosure of campaign donations, was recently named by PoliticsOnline and Harvard University as one of "The 25 Who are Changing the World of Internet and Politics." Based on a poll of PoliticsOnline's 25,000 readers and subscribers, the list amounts to a who's who of political *Webmeisters*, including international Internet political sites in India, Italy, Sweden and Germany. The ranking puts Alexander in good company, with esteemed Internet pioneers, such as the Pew Charitable Trusts, as well as the infamous, such as headliner Matt Drudge of the Drudge Report. And, of course, it tipped its hat to the purely partisan and effective Web gurus who reaped Internet magic for U.S. Senator John McCain (R-Arizona), Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura and former Veep Al Gore.

Eco Watch:

The brown, brown grass of home

Now comes yet another study to indicate that toxic dump sites — at least in Los Angeles County — are disproportionately located in low-income and Latino neighborhoods, and it shows that the minority neighborhoods were there long before the so-called brownfields sprang up in their midst.

According to professor Manuel Pastor, who heads the Latin America and Latino studies program at University of California, Santa Cruz, these so-called toxic storage and disposal facilities (TSDFs) in Los Angeles County are clustered in neighborhoods that are poorer, more blue-collar and more non-white than surrounding neighborhoods. They also have significantly fewer homeowners, lower home values and rents, and far fewer college-educated residents. The latter factor, Pastor believes, may help explain why these neighborhoods are less able to fight the siting of toxic storage facilities in their backyards.

Pastor's findings do not come as a surprise to L.A.'s Latino lawmakers. Assemblyman Marco Firebaugh (D-East Los Angeles), whose district is sprinkled with chrome-plating works, said Pastor's demographic study "ends the longstanding debate of which came first, minorities or toxics."

State Senator Martha Escutia (D-Whittier) is pursuing SB32 to encourage cleanup of brownfields. The senator has walked a high wire, attempting to balance the concerns of environmentalists and developers, neither of whom trust the other to handle the cleanup — but both of whom are officially neutral on her bill.

Quotables.....

"Campaigns are not prom dates."

— Los Angeles Mayor-elect James Hahn, responding to charges that he played dirty in his TV ads, raising questions about the trustworthiness of candidate Antonio Villaraigosa.

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Excerpts:
From the Bookshelf

California Calls You
The Art of Promoting the Golden State: 1870-1940
By K.D. Kurutz and Gary F. Kurutz

Remember when heading to L.A. for vacation meant stopping not in Hollywood but at a tourist destination known as the California Alligator Farm? Or when Pasadena was better known for its ostrich ranch than for the Huntington Library? Granted, this was nearly 100 years ago, during the Golden State's "Vacationland" heyday back when promoters aimed to lure hordes of visitors in hopes they would set down roots and help grow this new frontier's economy.

"California Calls You" is a full-color journey down Memory Lane into this era, a time when posters, postcards, brochures, maps, magazines and other art displayed talent of the tallest order to sell the California dream, circa 1870 to 1940, to a world aching for paradise. For decades, boosters marketed this western Shangri-la in terms of golden opportunities: "The golden nuggets that initially symbolized California gave way to the golden grain, golden orange, golden poppy, 'black gold,' and the Golden Gate," wrote the authors. "All became symbols that expanded the imagination and the dreams...."

Collectors and fans of Californiana will marvel at the range of arty ephemera presented here by the authors, who are expert at their subject matter. Gary Kurutz, an authority on the bibliography of California, is the curator of special collections for the California State Library in Sacramento. K.D. Kurutz is co-director of the California Consortium for Arts Education in Sacramento.

Their book won a prestigious Silver Medal from the Commonwealth Club's California Book Awards, which have honored literary excellence in the state since 1931. The club dubbed "California Calls You" a "notable contribution to publishing."

— Compiled by CJ Editors

By the numbers

Ups and downs

$3,800: What Duke Energy Corp. charged the state of California per megawatt-hour during a peak in January 2001.

$297.75: The average wholesale price in California of a megawatt-hour of electricity in January 2001.

$1.36: Duke Energy's average price for a megawatt-hour of electricity in California during the first quarter of 2001.

112: Number of times that Duke's peak price was higher than the average wholesale price of electricity for California in January 2001.

$1,900: What Reliant Energy Inc. charged for the state of California per megawatt-hour during a peak in May 2001.

11%: Percentage increase in energy conservation by Californians in May 2001 over the same month in 2000.

20: Percentage of energy conservation over last summer's usage that the state Public Utilities Commission is requesting of California consumers this summer.

$50: What Duke Energy Corp. offered last summer to charge California per megawatt-hour.

Source: Bloomberg.com

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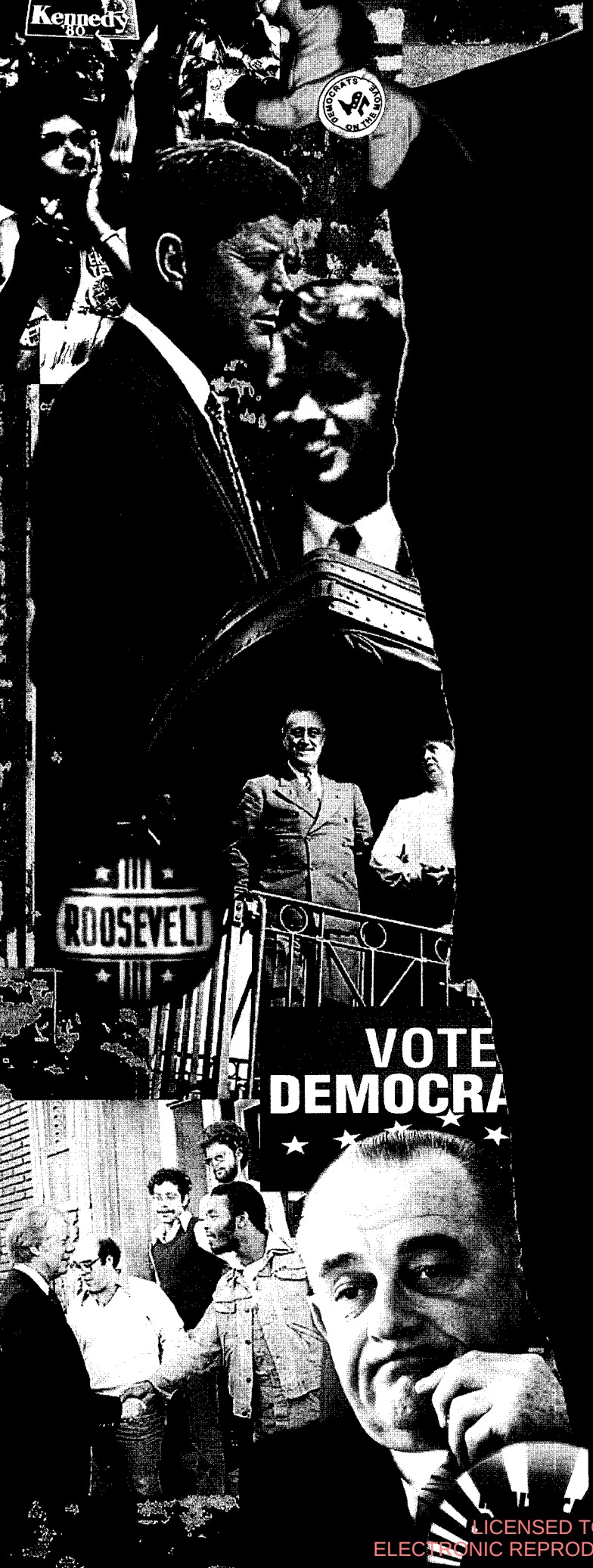

Are Demo aban the

As California's Democratic le center of the political spectru they aren't neglecting th

Ask California Democrats to give an account of their advocacy for the poor in recent years, and one hears what one might expect: From affordable housing to affordable energy, from health insurance to car insurance, Democrats remain the champions of the poor, and their party a haven for the disadvantaged.

This is the official line. But in truth, it does not mirror the sentiments of some of those who work with the poor, nor of some of California's leading Democrats. They see an evolution in the California Democratic Party's focus — not obvious in the party's election rhetoric but keenly noticed by church groups, consumer watchdogs, immigrant advocates and others who bring to the state Capitol the complaints of people who struggle to make a living.

These days, Democrats discover that they must shape their party's message of "compassion" to compete with the "compassionate conservatism" of a popular Republican

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the crats doning poor?

s move decidedly toward the

servers are left to wonder if

aditional constituencies.

By Dana Wilkie

president. As they legislate in an economy rapidly cooling, many try to avoid appearing too "liberal" with government money. In an effort to hold and win office, some train their policies on that all-important political center, a place not typically occupied by the poor, but by suburban, educated Californians who make decent money — and who vote. Under term limits, fewer Democrats have the years in office or the long-standing relationships necessary to win much ground in their battles for the poor. And as term limits force them to think early about the next step on the political ladder, they are under increasing pressure to forge healthy relationships with the very groups with which they have long clashed — the corporate interests that have the sort of campaign money that environmental groups and consumer advocates often do not.

It would be reaching to say California Democrats have abandoned the poor. On the other hand, those who have for decades agitated on behalf of the poor say there is an evident change in the types of battles Democrats are

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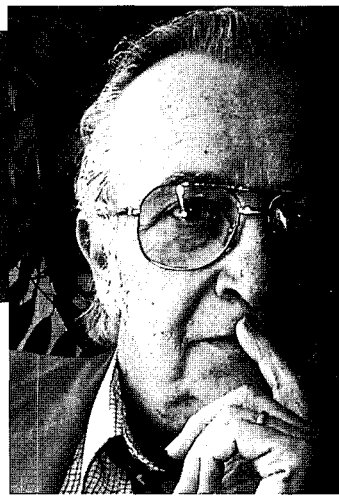
"But the reality is that... [many Democrats'] choices are made to appeal to moderates, and that means that people have their concerns taken care of on the basis of their ability to contribute [campaign money]."
— David Pollard, public policy director of the Catholic Conference


David Pollard of the Catholic Conference

waging, and those they are leaving unfought.

"I have seen this party transition from a full-blown advocate for the poor to... not having as a first priority the weak and voiceless," said David Pollard, associate director for public policy with the Catholic Conference. "They're trying to front as though [they] haven't changed, but getting elected and staying in office has become their driving concern. And that is done today with moderate, centrist issues."

Poverty advocates notice that Democrats — once energized and enthused about their prospects for winning health-insurance coverage for more of California's poor — are less likely to push such plans today. Lucy Quacinella, a health policy consultant with the San Francisco-based Maternal and Child Health Access, said that in recent years she has seen only "incremental" progress on insurance for the poor, and she blames Democrats, in part.

Limited programs

It is true that, thanks to Democrats, more Californians are covered by "Healthy Families" – the state program for those who earn too much to apply for Medi-Cal, but not enough to buy insurance. Californians who get Medi-Cal, the state health program for the neediest, no longer have to file "quarterly status reports" — paperwork that, when not returned, resulted in whole families being kicked off the program. Democratic Governor Gray Davis created the Department of Managed Care, part of a sweeping package of health maintenance organization reforms he signed last year that included making HMOs liable for malpractice lawsuits and improving their internal grievance processes.

But poverty advocates found that many of their ideas to enroll tens of thousands of Californians who were already eligible for Medi-Cal — by simplifying applications, for instance — went nowhere. Nor did their efforts to eliminate the cumbersome and complicated "assets test" for Medi-Cal — an hours-long process requiring recipients to prove they don't have assets over a certain amount.

"It's really startling when you look at what... New York and New Jersey and Wisconsin are doing — all these places that have Republicans in leadership posts, and they're making a dramatic difference insuring the uninsured," Quacinella said.

Doug Heller, a policy expert with the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, typically had the full backing of Democrats in the state Capitol when he agitated for things such as affordable car insurance. Lately, Heller finds his crusades can be compromised as much by Democrats as by Republicans.

When Heller's group pushed a statewide program for $300-a-year car insurance policies for poorer Californians, a cluster of Assembly Democrats sympathetic to business helped to weaken the plan, until it was only a pilot program for Los Angeles and San Francisco. Heller said the insurance industry was able to "get a lot more concessions" from these business-minded Democrats than they might have in years past.

"It's startling that there are so many hurdles to bills that protect low-income consumers," Heller said. "We can get over them, but that's sometimes at an expense that the public doesn't expect out of Democrats."

Term limits

Poverty advocates say the devolution of California government has taken some control over poverty programs out of the hands of state Democrats and placed it with local officials. And after decades of entitlement programs produced few changes in the dynamics of poverty, the President Clinton-led welfare reforms of 1996 signaled a shift in Democrats' thinking about how to help the poor.

"I think some of these dynamics have been swirling for quite a while," said Scott Anderson, director of the California Council of Churches, an interdenominational group representing 1.5 million church members. "There's now a bipartisan majority that believes that the approach we took from the great Depression through the 1980s created some structural problems — intergenerational dependency on the [government welfare] system that disempowered people."

Another reason for the new direction by Democrats, Heller believes, is term limits. Democrats in safe districts need not worry as much about getting re-elected with the help of the poor as they do forging ties to the business lobbies that can help them get elected to the next political office when term limits force them out of an old one.

Gale Kaufman, one of California's leading Democratic campaign consultants, believes term limits also rob Democrats of the time and relationships they need to agitate for poverty issues.

"When you had legislators here for a long time, they could take on a fight like the uninsured and they could stay with it, year in and year out, and make some advances," Kaufman said. "But now, even the strongest [poverty]

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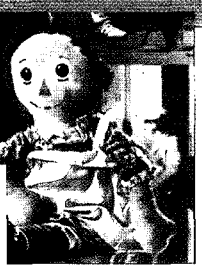

ove) Holly Mitchell of Wes ern Center on
and Poverty; (Below) Sco t Anderson of
California Council of Chur ches

"It's startling that there are so many hurdles to bills that protect low-income consumers," Heller said. "We can get over them, but that's sometimes at an expense that the public doesn't expect out of Democrats."
— Doug Heller, Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights

advocates come in and, just when they're building a consensus, half their colleagues are off running for other offices."

Moreover, new Democrats elected to traditionally conservative districts aren't likely to make waves. Lou Correa, the only Democratic Assembly member from Orange County, "is certainly on the side of the poor, but... he won't vote for something that's going to antagonize his constituents," said Sister Sheila Walsh, founder of JERICHO, an interfaith organization that help the poor. And Democrats recently elected to the state Assembly from the Central Valley tend to hold more modera e, pro-business views than their more liberal counterparts in Los Angeles. In fact, these Democrats formed their own caucus in the state Assembly, and they have sometim es made it difficult for their party to win the majority of v otes needed to pass legislation on workers compensatior and environmental regulation.

Up from poverty

"I think of them as not catering to labor, but embracing business,' said Dennis White, an aide to the caucus leader, Assem olyman Dennis Cardoza of Merced. "Most of them probabl owned or ran a business themselves prior to coming to the Legislature." Their views, White said, are increasingly c cepted in the lower house — "much different from the dynamic that existed prior, when they were kind of the rebellious ones bucking the [Democratic] leadership."

Similarly, many of the new Latinos in the statehouse were either farmworkers or the children of farm workers. They bring with them the experience of poverty, but also experience in agri-business. They understand that "if you're going to be elected and to do anything, you can't be a flaming liberal," Walsh said.

Finally, Democrats nationwide have a tough act to follow in the personable President Bush, who appeals to moderates who like his conservative fiscal policies at a time when the nation is losing jobs and the stock market is tanking. Spending more money on the poor doesn't sit well with "more fiscally and socially conservative people who believe in the 'pull yourself up by the bootstraps' notion," said Holly Mitchell, a lobbyist at the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

In Sacramento, some Democrats see no change in their attitudes toward the poor. Those who do pointed to the things that constrain them — such as the two-thirds vote requirement in the statehouse to pass most fiscal bills, and the need to get waivers from the Republican-controlled Congress to accomplish some of their goals for the needy. And California's energy crisis, they said, has stolen their time and efforts.

"I don't think there's another single issue in the Capitol that's getting its just desserts," said Assemblywoman Christine Kehoe (D-San Diego). "Energy has consumed us. I've heard so many times that we don't have to worry about hospitals and schools if they don't have lights and power."

Energy drain

These days, power — or the lack of it — may be one of the best illustrations of the divide between those with money, and those without. Democrats insisted they have kept the poor in mind throughout the state's power crisis. The sweeping energy-conservation measure that Kehoe carried this year includes $240 million to help poorer Californians pay their gas and electric bills and to make their homes more energy-efficient.

Poverty advocates are uncertain how these efforts will shake out. Rolling blackouts and the recent bankruptcy declartion of PG&E have put pressure on lawmakers to produce immediate remedies, but advocates warn these may not keep energy bills affordable over the long run. For instance, significant investments in renewable energy sources such as solar-thermal and hydroelectric power take far more legislative time than the current crisis has allowed. And some consumer groups fear California may lurch from crisis to crisis until Democratic lawmakers stand up to utility companies, which are typically sources of large campaign gifts.

"A lot of minorities and the poor are still believing [that there is] going to be a concentrated and a determined effort [by the party] to be the voice and advocate and champion of the person who has no voice," said Pollard of the Catholic Conference. "But the reality is that... (many Democrats') choices are made to appeal to moderates, and

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"The first Democratic governor we get is a moderate who is very cautious. An idea has to be around for a while, or it has to be an idea that's been tried in another state and been successful, before he's willing to buy into it."

— state Senator Jackie Speier

that means that people have their concerns taken care of on the basis of their ability to contribute [campaign money]."

One frequently hears, directly or by innuendo, that it is Davis — the state party's leader — who has done the most to steer California Democrats toward the concerns of the moderate voter and the middle class, rather than the underclass.

When state Senator Deirdre Alpert (D-Coronado) and other Democrats last year sought to spend more money on California's worst-performing schools — those whose children typically struggle with poverty, abuse and neglect — Davis often wanted to broaden their legislation and to split money with schools closer to the middle on performance evaluations. Alpert believed the governor felt driven to fulfill his campaign promise to improve California schools before he runs for re-election.

"So where are you most likely to get actual results [when] you look in the newspapers?" asked Alpert, who was chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee last year. "You're more likely to have results at schools closer to the middle [in performance]." These are the schools, Alpert said, "that he can point to [to show he was] living up to what he promised."

A reluctant governor

State Senator Jackie Speier, (D-Hillsborough) who last year was chairwoman of the Senate Insurance Committee, described Davis as initially "very reluctant" to expand Healthy Families to include more poor adults. Davis incorporated more parents in the budget he proposed last January, but only after Washington threatened to take federal money from Healthy Families because enrollment had failed to meet expectations. Because of the state's runaway spending on power, that money might be gone.

Poverty advocates could not convince Davis to combine Healthy Families and Medi-Cal into a single, trimmer agency offering health care to more Californians. Many advocates felt that his highly touted crusade against Medi-Cal fraud was designed to draw attention to a racy issue without addressing the millions of uninsured people in the state. And when California won its share of the settlement from a lawsuit brought by states against tobacco companies, Davis initially resisted Democrats' efforts to devote the money exclusively to health programs. Late last year, he agreed to use tobacco money for the Healthy Families expansion.

Davis last year even disappointed his union allies and legislative Democrats when he vetoed benefit increases for unemployed and injured workers.

"I do think Democrats have been self-censoring," Quacinella said. "The governor made it clear early on that the role of the Legislature is to implement his vision. When the single person in the state with the power to sign or veto your bill has made it clear that that's how he expects the relationship to work, it poses some challenges in terms of setting your own agenda."

The governor's Sacramento office referred questions to Davis' political office, which did not return calls. But Davis supporters said the governor's critics may have expected too much from him after 16 years of Republican chief executives.

"The first Democratic governor we get is a moderate who is very cautious," said Speier. "An idea has to be around for a while, or it has to be an idea that's been tried in another state and been successful, before he's willing to buy into it."

Housing help

Other Davis supporters said the governor may be timid about committing more money to poverty programs because state revenues have been compromised by the energy crisis.

And Marc Brown, co-director of the California Housing Law Project, said that as home costs skyrocketed, Davis and other Democrats worked hard to help the poor.

"Davis got us over $5 million in housing money last year, probably more money than we got in 20 years prior," Brown said, adding that state Senator John Burton (D-San Francisco) and Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys) also championed bills protecting the most vulnerable of tenants. "Coming off probably the best year ever, it's hard for us to complain."

It is no secret that Davis may run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004. If he does, said Heller of the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, he will need to be on speaking terms with big-business groups — if only to prevent them from launching an all-out campaign against him.

"What's going on with some of the Democratic business members on the Assembly side is magnified with Governor Davis," Heller said. "[Davis] feels he has to go through Texas and Wall Street to get to D.C. Gray Davis does not want an energy industry that will make it their prime objective to defeat him if he runs for president."

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Exit "Education Governor," enter the "Energy Governor"

by Susan Rasky

While Gray Davis was proudly proclaiming California had turned a corner in the energy battle last month, the governor's image-tenders turned an important corner of their own. Based on new internal polling numbers and focus groups, the Davis strategists believe they have successfully re-framed the energy "story." Reframed it, that is, in the governor's favor to spare him the brunt of voter wrath.

In short, the governor's spinners are convinced they have finally made energy George Bush's mess. If that's true — and public polling suggest it may well be — the political transubstantiation owes at least as much to extraordinary good luck as it does to any genius in Sacramento.

Political pros would say that smart elected officials make their own luck. But still, who could have guessed from Bush's presidential campaign that his political advisers would be so tone-deaf about California?

Who could have imagined a White House energy policy leaving open the possibility for off-shore oil drilling in Santa Barbara and Mendocino? And who could have predicted the Jim Jeffords defection that would put the U.S. Senate in Democratic hands at precisely the moment intervention by federal energy regulators – or more accurately the lack of it – was beginning to register in the public consciousness? A Democratic majority of one makes the possibilities for high-profile energy oversight hearings almost infinite.

Although the Davis strategists — chief political adviser Garry South, pollster Paul Maslin and more recently Chris Lehane and Mark Fabiani on energy damage control — had no more to do with any of that than they did with balmy June weather or lower natural gas prices, they have been deft in making the most of good fortune and crafting the energy story Davis will tell through his re-election campaign and perhaps on his way to the presidential trail.

"White hats and black hats," is how Maslin describes it, noting particularly that the mere mention of 'Texas" in a focus group unleashes torrents of invective about George Bush, Dick Cheney and greedy energy companies.

Maslin sums up the Davis campaign pitch as a heartening tale about Davis leading Californians through the tough times and about a Gray Davis "legacy" of energy independence.

But what of the Education Governor? The one who ran on pledges that education would be his No. 1, 2 and 3 priorities? "Education," Maslin observed, presumably from his own poll results, "is never again going to get the same salience." Well, there's a relief! And more good fortune for Davis, given the dismal results of the recent trial of the high school exit exam he rammed down the Legislature's throat in 1999.

Exam scores were so low that education officials had to lower passing thresholds in math and English to avoid "unacceptably high" fail rates. The test will be re-evaluated at just about the time the education, er, energy governor has to decide whether to scratch his White House itch for 2004. If kids are still bombing out on scholastics by then, "legacy of energy reform" sounds like a much better campaign theme.

Who could have guessed from Bush's presidential campaign that his political advisers would be so tone-deaf about California?

Which calls to mind former Governor Pete Wilson and his 1994 re-election campaign. Smart, ambitious and forced to handle an economic catastrophe he didn't create, Wilson's approval ratings plummeted as campaign season approached. His advisers had focus groups, too. They discovered that illegal immigration provoked surprisingly strong reactions and persuaded Wilson to make it the centerpiece of his ultimately successful campaign. Clearly immigrant-bashing and Texas-oil-company bashing are very different things. The similarities between Wilson '94 and Davis '02 are at most superficial. But the comparison is instructive in this regard: The Wilson strategists saw the illegal immigration issue as an entry ticket to the national political arena.

Energy policy is probably a better bet — certainly a more respectable one — if Davis is looking to dabble in 2004. That is, of course, unless making George Bush the black hat villain in the energy story also enables him to become the hero — or the focus groups decide the real story is more like Social Security or health care.

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Who's Minding the

Groundwater is vital to California — never more so than during a drought. But the state has been reluctant to regulate this natural resource, despite increasing signs that the next dry spell may have already arrived. Now, some experts predict a water shortage akin to the energy crisis.

By Noel Brinkerhoff

During the continuing saga of California's electricity shortage, state officials have regularly asserted that they have both the will and power to do whatever is necessary to resolve the crisis, including the drastic step of seizing local power plants if necessary. In contrast, however, state officials have long shied away from involvement with another critical resource upon which millions of Californians depend for their daily lives: groundwater.

Groundwater is arguably one of California's most important — and most politically overlooked — resources. It is overlooked because it is out-of-sight, out-of-mind; water that sits far below the surface where no one sees it, and where few know of its existence, let alone its significance. Yet, this hidden

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Aquifer?

Extraction of groundwater in the Antelope Valley has caused fissures on Rogers Lake bed at Edwards Air Force Base, which serves as a runway for the space shuttle and other aircraft. Mel Marmet, airfield manager, stands in a 2,000 foot long fissure that dates back to 1991. Courtesy of the Water Education Foundation.

natural treasure plays a pivotal role in the well-being and survival of Californians — in both good times and bad. On average, when winters are wet and reservoirs teem with water, groundwater is still counted on annually to provide one-third of the state's overall water supply. Half of all Californians get some or all of their drinking water from groundwater sources, called aquifers. But when skies dry up and drought strikes, groundwater becomes vital to the state, making up as much as 60 percent of California's water supply when lakes and rivers shrink from lack of rainfall.

The importance of groundwater during a drought is especially critical today, given what may lie ahead. Water officials already predict that California faces a serious shortfall in its water supply in the coming decades – even if storms are plentiful — because of the state's steadily growing population (projected to grow by 11 million by 2020) and environmental policies to divert more water for

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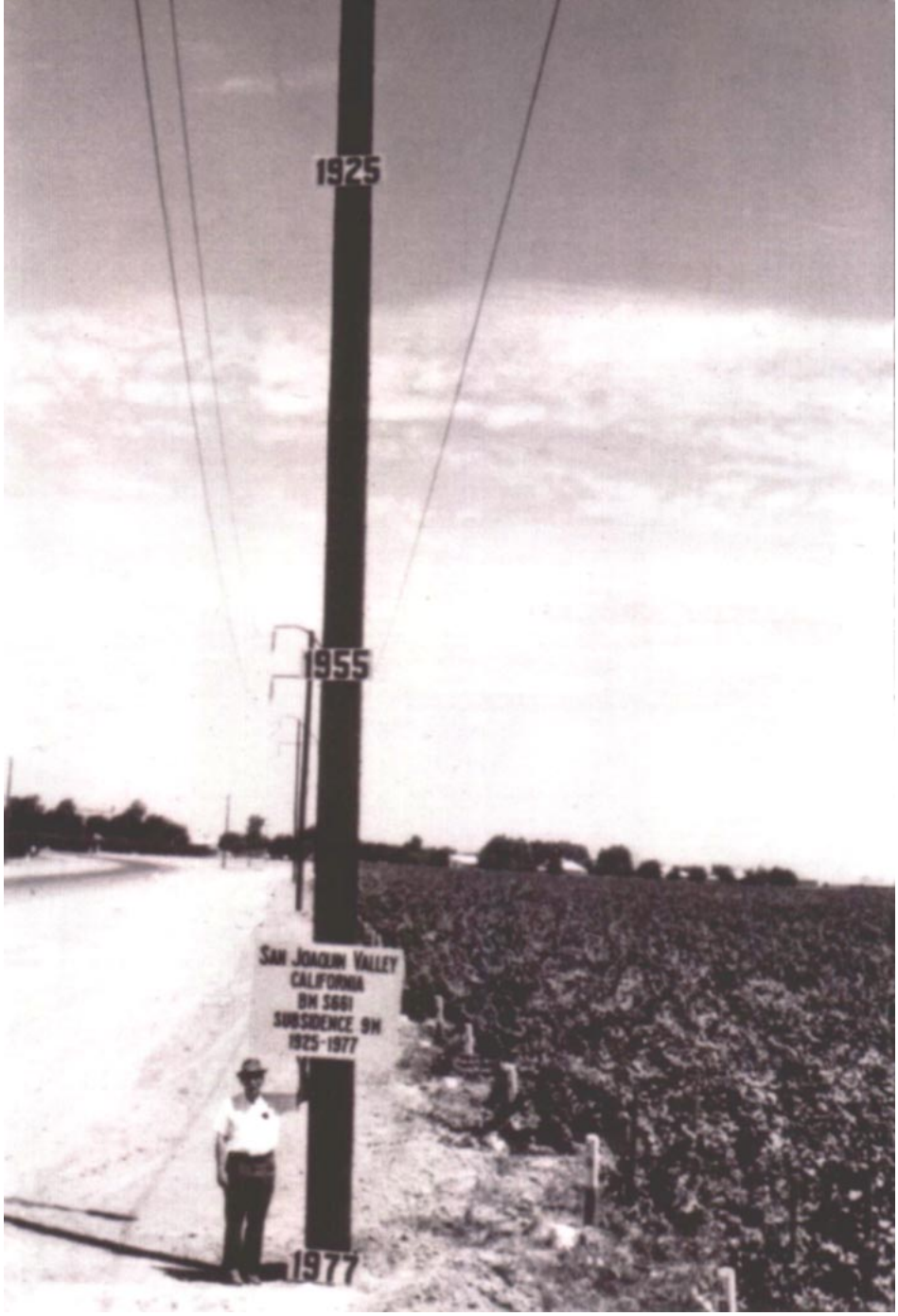
fish and habitats. In addition, California faces the possibility of a prolonged drought — one that may already have begun, according to some climate experts — that may last a decade or longer.

"We're always in for a long-term drought," said Dr. Bill Patzert, a veteran oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, who has been studying the Pacific Ocean and its effects on California's climate. "We're definitely right now into what I call the negative phase of the Pacific decadal oscillation (PDO)." That bit of technical jargon, explains Patzert, translates into a long-lasting phenomenon which results in cooler ocean temperatures and fewer storms.

The ramifications for California from this PDO, Patzert predicts, could be 20 percent less rainfall on average for 10 years or more. The last PDO to occur stretched from the 1950s to the late 1970s, and this year, California experienced its first "dry" winter, as classified by state water officials, in half a decade, with rainfall totals down 30 percent to 40 percent from normal.

If Patzert's prediction proves true and the state experiences a series of dry winters, more groundwater will be drawn to ease the state through a water crisis. But excessive use of groundwater does not come without a price. One need only look to the Central Valley, or areas along the coast, where over-pumping from aquifers has resulted in the ground cracking or sinking, or the water table becoming contaminated with sea water. On top of these worries is the problem of whether the groundwater being extracted is safe and useable, thanks to human contamination of some aquifers from chemicals such as MTBE and Chromium 6.



A water benchmark southeast of Mendota shows the land surface has subsided nearly 30 feet because of intensive groundwater pumping. Signs on the pole indicate the level of the land surface in 1925, 1955 and 1977. Courtesy of the Water Education Foundation.

Despite these problems, the state has made little effort historically to properly manage aquifers, relying instead on local agencies. Environmentalists are working through the Legislature this year to improve the oversight of groundwater contamination, but the effort is not going as planned. And other key concerns, such as preventing excessive pumping of groundwater, are not being addressed at all, despite the looming threat of drought and its ramifications on the resource.

Don't tread on me

California uses more groundwater than any other state in the country, extracting 14.5 million acre-feet annually. An acre-foot, as the label indicates, is enough water to cover one acre of ground with one foot of water. California's usage would cover 15 million football fields with one foot of water. Despite this heavy use, California is one of only two states (with Texas) that uses groundwater but has no statewide authority to regulate and manage the groundwater supply. It has been this way since the state was founded. Water-rights law, as it first developed, established groundwater as a property right belonging to those whose land sits atop an aquifer. This legal right continues today, and farmers and local landowners have grown accustomed to being in charge of the groundwater sitting beneath their lands — so much so that they have vigorously fought even the mere mention of the state overseeing underground wells.

"The further away that the control is, the less knowl-

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edge and understanding there is of any given local area," explains Dave Kranz, water information director for the California Farm Bureau, which opposes state control of groundwater. "The philosophy has always been that local people know the local situation best to come up with solutions."

Today, farmers are joined by representatives of many urban water districts, who also detest the idea of the state sticking its nose in groundwater management. "Just because [state oversight] is a model adopted by other states doesn't necessarily mean it is one that California should adopt," argues Steve Hall, executive director of the 435-member Association of California Water Agencies. "I would view it as a last resort."

Even those whose primary concerns are the care and preservation of groundwater aren't willing to do away with local control just yet. Anthony Saracino, a water consultant and co-founder of the Groundwater Resources Association of California, says it would be "extremely disruptive, if not chaotic" for the state government to mandate groundwater management on the locals. At the same time, Saracino admits that local oversight of aquifer use has been mixed at best, with examples of both "extremely good" and "extremely poor" groundwater management.

Saracino's assessment is shared by those in the environmental community. Barry Nelson, senior policy analyst for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), says, "In some parts of the state, and a number of urban areas, the groundwater is pretty carefully managed. But in the rural parts of the state, which is of course where most of our groundwater resources are, it's still the Wild West — where there are virtually or literally no rules, and it causes enormous problems."

Cracks, collapses and contamination

One of those problems occurs when so much groundwater is pumped that it causes fractures in the surrounding land. An example, as documented by the nonprofit Water Education Foundation, occurred on a dry lake bed at Edwards Air Force Base in the early 1990s when a crack — 12 feet deep, four feet wide and 2,000 feet long — forced the closure of a runway. The cause: aquifer overdraft from growing urban communities in the Antelope Valley (See photo page 1").

In addition to fissures, the land can also collapse when too much water is removed from the earth, causing sedimentary layers to compress. Land subsidence, as it's known, was especially acute in the San Joaquin Valley at one time when farmers relied heavily on groundwater pumps to irrigate their fields and orchards. According to the United States Geological Survey, nearly one-half of the valley, or approximately 5,200 square miles, sank at least one foot between 1920 and 1977. And in one location near Mendota, the land dropped almost 30 feet over a period of 50 years (see photo, page 18).

Heavily drained aquifers also can lead to saltwater leaching into the surrounding water table, making it undrinkable and dangerous for crops. According to a report released in April by the NRDC, high salinity levels are a problem in aquifers along the state's southern coast, throughout Southern California and in the Central Valley. In Ventura County, a half-century of increased groundwater extraction has resulted in sea water intruding as far inland as Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. And in locations throughout Kern County, the state's leading agricultural county, salinity levels were found to exceed the federal government's threshold for salt.

Salt isn't the only concern in California's groundwater, according to NRDC officials, who used information from state and federal agencies to produce their report, "California's Contaminated Groundwater: Is the state

The Cadiz factor: Banking for Dollars

In recent years, water officials have turned to underground aquifers not only as a source from which to extract water but also for water storage. Known as "water banking," the concept usually involves taking extra surface water from a river or lake and putting it into the ground as insurance against the next drought. The concept sounds simple, but it is not without its controversies — both environmental and political.

In the eastern Mojave Desert lies a vast stretch of land owned by Cadiz Incorporated, an international agricultural and water resources corporation. Cadiz wants to use the aquifer below its land for a 50-year, multimillion-dollar water banking project, storing water from the Colorado River for the Metropolitan Water District. MWD provides water for 17 million people in Southern California, and Cadiz plans to deliver the water — plus some existing groundwater — to MWD when the next drought hits.

The Sierra Club and other organizations oppose the project, claiming the extraction of existing groundwater could lower the water table to dangerous levels, resulting in dust storms and drying up the natural water supply for big horn sheep. Cadiz and MWD officials insist that their groundwater management plan — which the U.S. Bureau of Land Management helped devise — will ensure that neither the aquifer nor the local habitat will be harmed.

The project has drawn attention because Cadiz's owner is Keith Brackpool, a British-born financier who enjoys close ties with Governor Gray Davis. Brackpool has advised the governor on various water matters, and Cadiz has contributed substantially to Davis, including $50,000 last year alone. The relationship between Brackpool and Davis has stirred concern during the debate over the water-banking proposal, even though the federal government, not the state, must sign off on the project.

— Noel Brinkerhoff

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minding the store?". Fertilizers, arsenic, Chromium 6 (made famous by Erin Brockovich's battle with Pacific Gas and Electric Company) and MTBE have been recorded at dangerous levels in various aquifers around the state, including many heavily populated counties. In fact, 12 counties — Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Solano — account for 75 percent of all MTBE detections that exceeded government safety levels.

After compiling available data for their report, NRDC officials concluded that government monitoring of groundwater is "incomplete and often fundamentally unreliable," even though a number of different agencies gather data on the subject. Consequently, they urged that the state dispose of its highly fragmented system of monitoring groundwater and put one agency in charge to keep better tabs on the resource. Assemblywoman Carol Liu (D-La Canada Flintridge) took up this suggestion and introduced legislation, AB 599, to do just that.

Watered-down groundwater proposals

AB 599 is a good example of just how difficult it is politically to achieve even a modest change in the state's role when it comes to groundwater. The bill, as first drafted, would have consolidated information gathering on groundwater contamination; it didn't even touch other important problems, such as how to prevent groundwater overdraft. NRDC Senior Attorney David Beckman, who worked on the groundwater report and AB 599, said his organization didn't want to bite off too much at once by also tackling the pumping issue.

The bill cleared the Assembly in June but not before oil companies and local water agencies opposed to AB 599 successfully lobbied to make the State Water Resources Control Board the lead agency for collecting groundwater pollution data. Originally, NRDC wanted that agency to be the Department of Water Resources. Liu agreed to the change because the control board is the established authority under state law to deal with water pollution. Environmentalists, though, wanted the department in charge of a new monitoring program because the board, as one Capitol source privately noted, has a long history of not being the watchdog it's supposed to be.

Board spokesman Robert Miller prefered not to respond to criticism of the board, instead saying: "I'm going to stay away from that [criticism]. Our purpose here is to do the best we can to rectify the problem, and there's been resources allocated for that now. We're starting to move forward, and to get into the finger-pointing game is not productive."

AB 599 isn't the first groundwater bill to fall short of what environmentalists believe needs to be done for proper management of the resource. AB 3030, passed by the Legislature in 1992, marked the last time the state adopted a significant piece of groundwater legislation. It called upon local officials to *voluntarily* establish programs for regulating their groundwater. It wasn't made mandatory, as one water expert put it, because "that would have killed the bill."

Has AB 3030 created local groundwater management programs? It's difficult to say, says DWR hydrologist Carl Houge, because the bill didn't require locals to notify the state when such programs were established. Houge estimates that there are approximately 160 such programs in existence, plus another 60 or so groundwater plans created by court order or other legislative efforts. That's 220 — out of a total of 450 groundwater basins in California.

But even among those water districts that have adopted an AB 3030 program, the effort hasn't necessarily led to better management of the resource. "A lot of districts did a very perfunctory job in their AB 3030 plans. Some as short as a few pages," says Saracino. "And then they put it on a shelf and checked a box to say they did a [AB] 3030 plan — when in reality, they're not doing anything different to manage their resources."

Consequently, Saracino argues, it might be time for California to make local groundwater plans mandatory — assuming it's politically feasible. "I'm not sure the state is ready for it to become mandatory, but clearly people need to understand the value of doing an AB 3030 plan."

ACWA's Hall agrees that there needs to be more accountability at the local level when it comes to groundwater use. But he opposes making AB 3030 mandatory, saying the state should instead use the "carrot" of making funding for local water projects contingent upon the adoption of a groundwater plan.

"[AB 3030] worked pretty well," says Hall. "Not universally, but pretty well. It probably needs to be broadened to make sure that wherever there is an actively managed groundwater system or groundwater overdraft, that some local agency is in charge of managing it." Broadening the law, Hall cautions, doesn't mean making it mandatory.

In the meantime, groundwater consumption may go up in the very near future. The state received substantially less rainfall this winter, and although the previous six winters provided either average or above average rainfall, farmers already are getting shorted on their allotments of water from reservoirs, according to the Farm Bureau's Kranz, because California's water supply is barely keeping up with growing demand. The federally run Central Valley Project is only giving farmers 45 percent of the water they're contracted to receive, while California's State Water Project is only meeting 35 percent of its water deliveries to agriculture.

As a result, farmers must turn to other means to irrigate their crops, and if their fields sit atop an aquifer, then the pumps may be kicked into overdrive, especially if this year marks only the beginning of yet another drought as some predict. "It just makes you wonder," says Kranz, "When you get into that multi-year drought again, which we're due for, what are we going to do? We're going to be in a bad way. People are going to be pumping groundwater in that case."

Noel Brinkerhoff is associate editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com**

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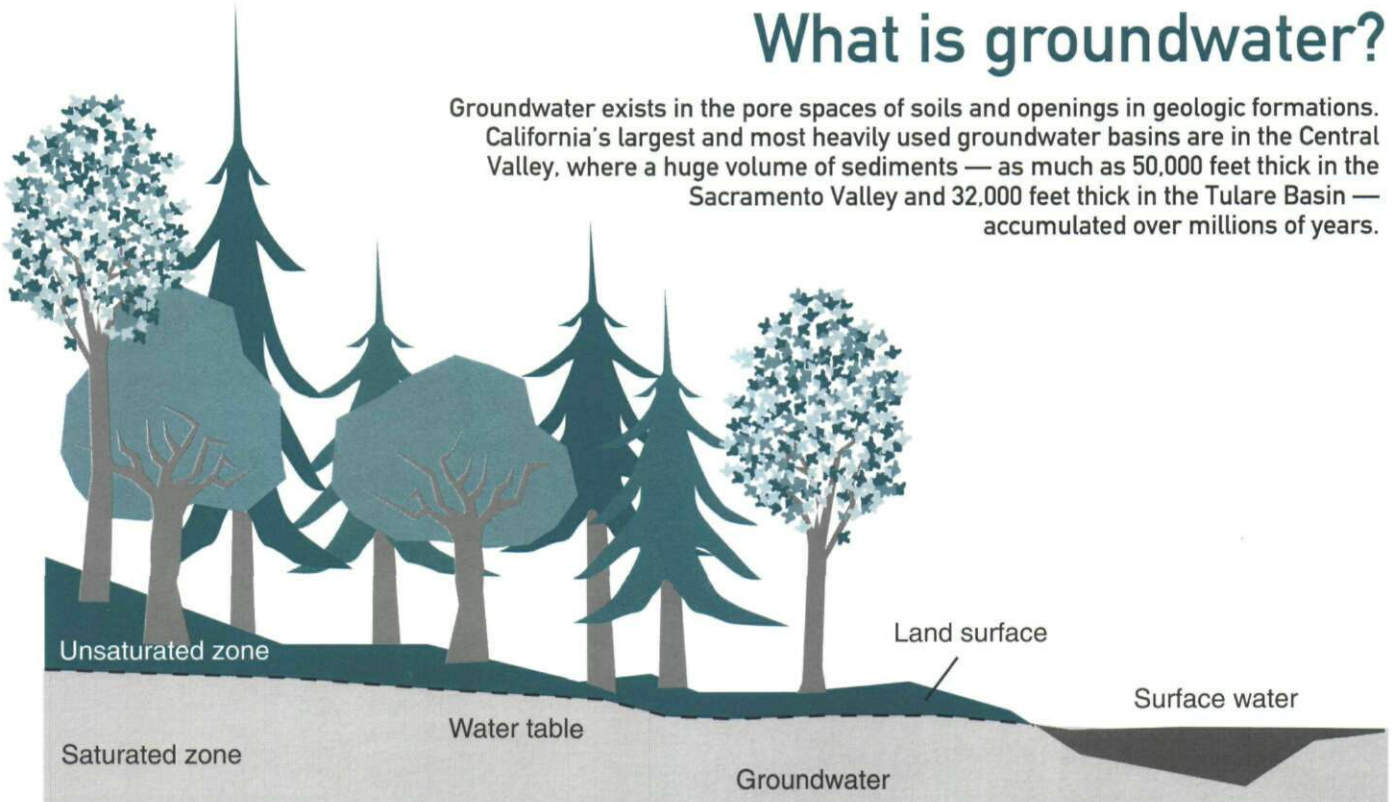
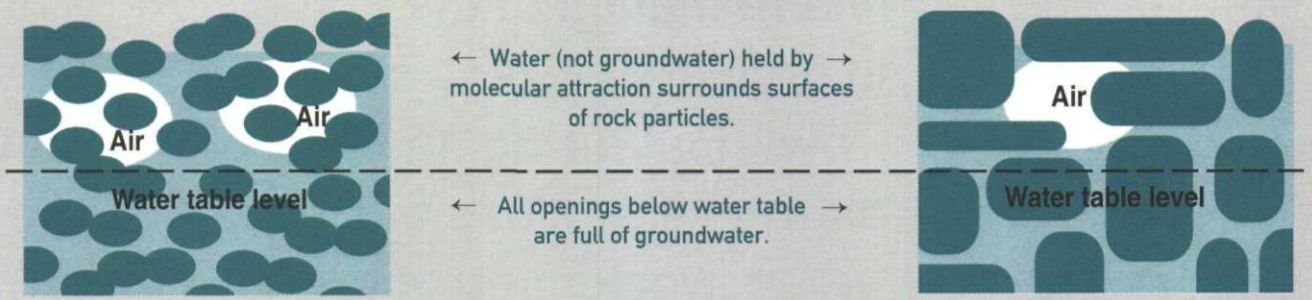
What is groundwater?

Groundwater exists in the pore spaces of soils and openings in geologic formations. California's largest and most heavily used groundwater basins are in the Central Valley, where a huge volume of sediments — as much as 50,000 feet thick in the Sacramento Valley and 32,000 feet thick in the Tulare Basin — accumulated over millions of years.



Where impervious layers of earth prevent liquid from percolating farther down, water accumulates, creating a saturated zone that can be tapped by wells. Saturated zones — or aquifers — can be several feet thick or several thousand feet thick. The top of the saturated zone is known as the water table.


Air
Air
Water table level
← Water (not groundwater) held by → molecular attraction surrounds surfaces of rock particles.
← All openings below water table → are full of groundwater.
Air
Water table level

Gravel **Creviced rock**

Groundwater can be pumped from two general types of geologic formations: sediments and fractured hard rock. Sediments primarily are made up of sand, gravel, silt and clay known as alluvium that were deposited by rivers eroding the surrounding area. Valleys and coastal plains are typically made up of alluvium and can hold large quantities of water.

More limited sources of groundwater can be found in small fractures within the hard rock of the Sierra Nevada, coastal and other mountain ranges that were fractured as they were pushed upward by volcanic forces or by the collision of shifting plates in the earth's crust. Though generally smaller in volume, many small wells tap these hard-rock sources.

Source: Water Education Foundation, U.S. Geological Survey General Interest Publication, Reston, Virginia, 1999 revision.
Graphic by Scarlet Shin.

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Karen Getman of the FPPC

It's a rare day that a speaker at a legal seminar has good news to deliver about trends unfolding at a government agency. But on October 14, 1999, San Francisco attorney Peter Bagatelos voiced high hopes for a more user-friendly Fair Political Practices Commission under the direction of its new chairwoman, Karen Getman.

Speaking to a roomful of campaign professionals gathered at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Bagatelos predicted Getman would make a world of difference at the FPPC, which in recent years had made life difficult for the political community it regulates. As a political attorney herself, he said, Getman would attack the job from the point of view of someone with first-hand experience wrestling with the FPPC's complicated labyrinth of regulations, forms and legal interpretations.

The chair of the Fair Political Practices Commission has sought to simplify implementation of the Political Reform Act so ordinary citizens can run for office without hiring an army of political attorneys. But has this quest led to a weakening of the act's intent?

By Cynthia H. Craft

"Being one of our own, a California political attorney, we are really hopeful that she will turn around the tide," Bagatelos told his audience. "Up until now, it's been running against the regulated community, with the laws getting tighter and tougher to comply with." However, he said, "Karen Getman is bringing a new balance to the commission."

Bagatelos, a prominent California elections lawyer, had more than unbridled enthusiasm to share at the seminar that day. As the incoming president of the California Political Attorneys Association, he had a virtual agenda of changes he hoped to see during Getman's four-year term. He ticked off a handful. They ranged from making audit conditions more favorable, to lightening up on penalties, to reining in some decisions made by the FPPC staff.

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By appointment from Governor Gray Davis, Karen Getman became the first woman to head the FPPC.

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Karen Getman in her Sacramento office of the FPPC.

Fast-forward to the present, nearly two years later and with only 18 months remaining in Getman's four-year term. Little on Bagatelos' wish list had come about exactly as he prescribed it, although there had been progress on many of the changes his industry sought. So, how would he rate his former colleague's progress now?

With high marks, Bagatelos says, but with no illusions that Getman will end up being a toady for the professional community. "Anyone who deals with Karen as chair would have to say she's been fair," says Bagatelos, whose clients have included former Carmel Mayor Clint Eastwood and San Francisco's consultant-candidate Clint Reilly. "I don't think she's been a political attorneys' chairperson," he said. "I'm sure the consumer interests and the reformers would like to see someone in the job who makes it even harder for the political community, with even tougher laws. But Karen has taken a reasonable, rational approach."

Getman, appointed by Governor Gray Davis, became the first woman to head the FPPC when she assumed the job in early 1999 at a particularly crucial turning point in the administrative agency's history. Just a year earlier, the Legislature and Governor Pete Wilson had directed a bipartisan commission to study whether the FPPC was going too far in ensuring compliance with the Political Reform Act of 1974.

A bloated reform act

Passed overwhelmingly as Proposition 9 by voters worried about Watergate-era political corruption, the act created the FPPC as the agency to follow through on its mandate. Among other things, the FPPC was charged with making sure elections are fair, ensuring full disclosure of political contributions and expenditures in election campaigns and guarding against conflicts of interest by public officials.

Trouble is, over a quarter-century of legal interpretation and tinkering left the act padded with some 200 amendments applied over the years by the Legislature. Consequently, critics said the act was bloated and harnessed in red tape. It served to turn people off to government and politics, they said, because novices and old pros alike feared inadvertently violating its rules and getting slapped with fines by the FPPC.

In entering the job, Getman was prepared for the bipartisan legislative commission's eventual harsh conclusion that the act was "overly complex and unduly burdensome." She was prepared, in fact, in more than one way – not only as an administrator but as an attorney.

"When I was a private attorney representing state and local officials, I had literally stopped taking clients because figuring out if they had con-

continued on page 29

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Karen Getman

continued from page 24

flicts of interest took so much time," Getman said in an interview. "The end result almost always was an opinion saying 'You might or you might not, but I really can't guarantee it.' That's obviously an impossible situation for somebody who is trying to comply with the law."

Fox in the hen house?

But while the Legislature, powerful lawyers and even the governor backed the bipartisan commission's review, one other faction of the Capitol community — campaign reform advocates and watchdog groups — had a decidedly chillier reaction. They wondered if they weren't witnessing the proverbial fox guarding the hen house, pointing to the fact that the commission comprised mainly politicians and political attorneys who had groused about the FPPC.

Still, Getman said, it was hard to ignore the fact that, in a focus group for the bipartisan commission's review, not a single person given a copy of an FPPC campaign finance form was able to understand it well enough to complete it correctly.

"I think there has been a morass of regulations and laws governing political campaigns and conflicts of interest," Getman said. "We are trying to break through that morass in a couple of core areas and get back to something manageable."

Speaking from her corner office with its expansive views of Sacramento's skyline, Getman, 43, reflected that she'd rather be remembered for her vision of standing back to identify what's important in the bigger picture than for obsessively pursuing compliance. Furthermore, she'd like to be remembered for staying focused on untangling a complex knot of regulations, making them easier to follow, not only for campaign professionals and candidates but for people on the periphery of politics as well.

In real-world terms, Getman's agenda really does not lie too far from that of Bagatelos – though for different reasons. While the attorneys association's goals are more or less self-serving, Getman says her objectives are to make her agency less intrusive and to encourage more participation in democracy. If, in the process, some of the smaller tentacles of the Political Reform Act of 1974 are sacrificed in order to save the larger integrity of the beast, so be it. Such a trade-off – the loss of some minute financial data about campaigns and public officials – is inevitable in the pursuit of simplification, she believes.

> "I think there has been a morass of regulations and laws governing political campaigns and conflicts of interest," Getman said.

Simplify, simplify, simplify

"It jibes perfectly in the bigger vision of making sure that we get the important elements of disclosure out there quickly in the way people can understand and use," Getman said. "And that's what we don't always do such a good job at, partly because we have to worry about so many nit-picking elements of disclosure. We lose sight of the forest for the trees."

In ordering her priorities – tackling conflict-of-interest restrictions first, then campaign finance reporting rules – Getman reflects the priorities of the bipartisan commission. In its report, the panel was adamant, nearly painting the effort to eliminate conflicts of interest as a witch-hunt of sorts. It read, "The quarter-century crusade to make certain that not a single potential or even theoretical conflict of interest exists has created a level of complexity that is unreasonable and, more fundamentally, counterproductive."

Getman witnessed that counterproductivity when she presided over the commission's high-profile hearings in the case of Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, California's former Democratic governor. In an ironic twist, Brown had approached the FPPC for an exemption to conflict-of-interest laws that he himself championed during his gubernatorial campaign. He had become enmeshed in the web of the Political Reform Act because he lives in a waterfront district that, as mayor, he would like to see redeveloped. Theoretically, that revitalization project could increase his property values, thus disqualifying him from acting in an official capacity on behalf of the project.

While the original intent of the Political Reform Act was to keep politics pure, its practical effect has been to prevent local officials such as Brown from doing their jobs — thereby disenfranchising the voters who elected them, Getman said.

In an uncharacteristically light moment, Getman and fellow commissioners share a laugh.

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The biggest beef many reform advocates have with the FPPC is that it falls short in its role of fostering public confidence in a democratic system.

Getman presides over a hearing.

As it turned out, Brown took his argument to an appeals court and won the right to participate in Oakland's redevelopment plan after all. Regardless of the outcome, Getman said, the case unmasked the law's sometimes impossibly perplexing complexity: In order to determine whether an official who owned property had a conflict of interest, Getman said, "We had this system where you had to go out and measure from your backyard. If you were within 300 feet of [the] property [being developed], there was one rule. If you were between 300 feet and 1,200 feet, there was another. For 1,200 and 2,500 feet, there was another. If your property was an acre in size, there was yet another. We've slimmed that down so now there are basically two circles that people fall within."

City, county and school board officials report that they appreciate Getman's simplicity movement. Fontana City Councilwoman Janice Rutherford, who relates how a city attorney inadvertently gave her wrong advice and she nearly violated the act, says, "It was very scary."

"It's incredibly important that the FPPC makes their rules understandable by the average person," said Rutherford, who is also chief of staff for Assemblyman Bill Leonard (R-Rancho Cucamonga). "Or else we might become a government of only the elite who can afford private attorneys and professional treasurers. The average person shouldn't have to spend a fortune to influence government."

Less disclosure

Getman has already wrapped up her initiative to simplify and make more understandable the FPPC's conflict-of-interest regulations, but a related paperwork requirement lingers that she would also like to see pared back. That is the requirement for public officials to fill out and file as public record what's known as Form 700, a "statement of economic interest" that reveals personal financial information.

Up and down California, about 100,000 people working in government are required to file SEIs, Getman said, "which I think is ridiculous to begin with." Over the years, the lists of people who have to file SEIs expanded so much that even the head lifeguard occasionally exercising purchasing power has to fill one out, she said. At the same time, FPPC staff couldn't even keep up with all the filings. "There were just so many that we couldn't even really get a handle on them," Getman said. The dilemma posed a question: "Had we just gone so far on the other end, with so much disclosure, that we've lost control?"

A strong, opposing view is held, not surprisingly, by none other than the members of the reform community who fought for and supported all those cumbersome disclosure laws. Jim Knox, the executive director of California Common Cause, is one of Getman's toughest critics. He sees her agency as something of a paper tiger — failing to live up to its promise as a watchdog on behalf of voters.

"I don't see the FPPC out there aggressively trying to weed through this stuff," Knox said. "I can show you cases [of complaints] we've filed at the FPPC that they've bungled. Karen Getman makes the case that enforcement at the FPPC has stepped up under her. But I don't see it."

Getman begs to differ. She points out that the FPPC's enforcement division opened 858 enforcement cases last year and prosecuted 174 administrative cases, far more than any other year in commission history. "We do some serious investigation, in a professional way, that will get stern results at the end, but at the point when it is fully justified."

The biggest beef many reform advocates have with the FPPC is that it falls short in its role of fostering public confidence in a democratic system that lately has been battered by the perception that big-money donors rule politics.

"Does the public think there is too much money in politics or are they worried about the influence that money might have?" Getman asks rhetorically. "Poll after poll shows that campaign finance is not high on the list of public concerns. We at the com-

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mission are very concerned about the influence of money, in that it does seem to make people more cynical about the political process.

"The real challenge is how to take the money out of politics on the other end, finding ways to make campaigns less expensive, making it possible to get a message out without it costing so much."

Deep connections

A graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School, Getman launched her legal career in Washington, D.C., as a staff attorney for the Women's Legal Defense Fund. She grew up in a central Connecticut town, the daughter of a utility company worker and an accountant, in a household where talk at the dinner table centered around politics, sparking her lifelong interest in the topic. She majored in women's studies and, while in law school, edited the Harvard women's *Law Journal.*

As a single parent of two school-age children, ages 11 and 9, with a challenging commute from home in the Bay Area to the office in Sacramento, Getman advises professional women to realize that "Nobody can have it all... The question is what is important to you." For Getman, that means juggling work, parenthood and volunteering on her children's school site council, a post she won by running for election for the first time.

Although Getman says she does not know what lies ahead after her $117,000-a-year, four-year term ends, some observers figure she'll return to a high-powered Bay Area law firm like those from whence she came. Prior to her appointment to the FPPC, Getman was a special counsel with the law firm Rogers Joseph, O'Donnell & Quinn from 1996 to 1999, and before that she worked as associate attorney with Remcho, Johansen & Purcell, the San Francisco firm headed by Joe Remcho, a leading attorney for the California Democratic Party.

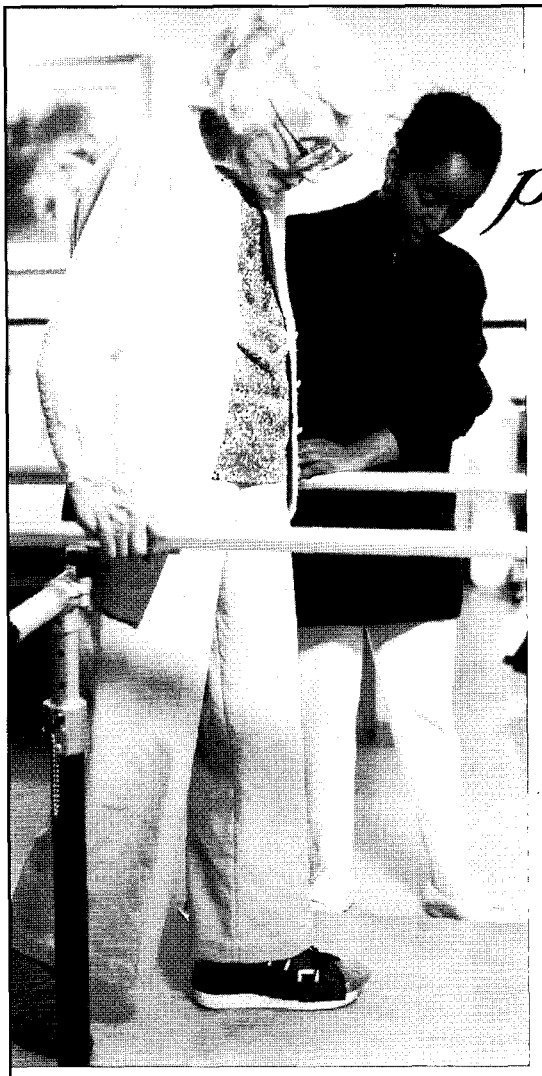
Her connections made inevitable some speculation that Getman would do the bidding of former colleagues and mentors in her post as head of the FPPC, says Tony Miller, a former critic of Getman's early direction of the commission. Miller, once the acting secretary of state in California and an early member of the FPPC, more recently prodded the commission into being more proactive when he assumed the role of a private attorney general and exposed violations of disclosure laws.

Since then, he believes, Getman has led the agency toward tougher enforcement, finding ways to "find the bad apples and get to them."

"Increasingly, she's no longer an attorney representing the regulated community," says Miller. "She's the chair of a commission that is charged with implementing an initiative that was adopted by the people – and she takes that job very seriously."

It's a good thing, too, because even a generation later, Californians watching the unyielding flow of money going into politics still take their Political Reform Act seriously.

Cynthia H. Craft is editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**



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Mayor James Hahn's L.A. story

Housing, racial harmony, transportation and Los Angeles' evergreen issue of cleaning house at the police department head up newly elected Mayor James Hahn's list.

By Laura Mecoy

LOS ANGELES — Several minutes into the press conference, flashbulbs exploded and camera shutters began to click in unison. Los Angeles' new mayor, James K. Hahn, had merely lifted his right hand to make a point. But the photographers knew that was as much expression as they would get from a subject who's so low-key that a local radio talk show host has dubbed him "Jimmy Yawn."

That such an uninspiring public figure defeated a dynamo like former Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa in the June 5 mayoral election

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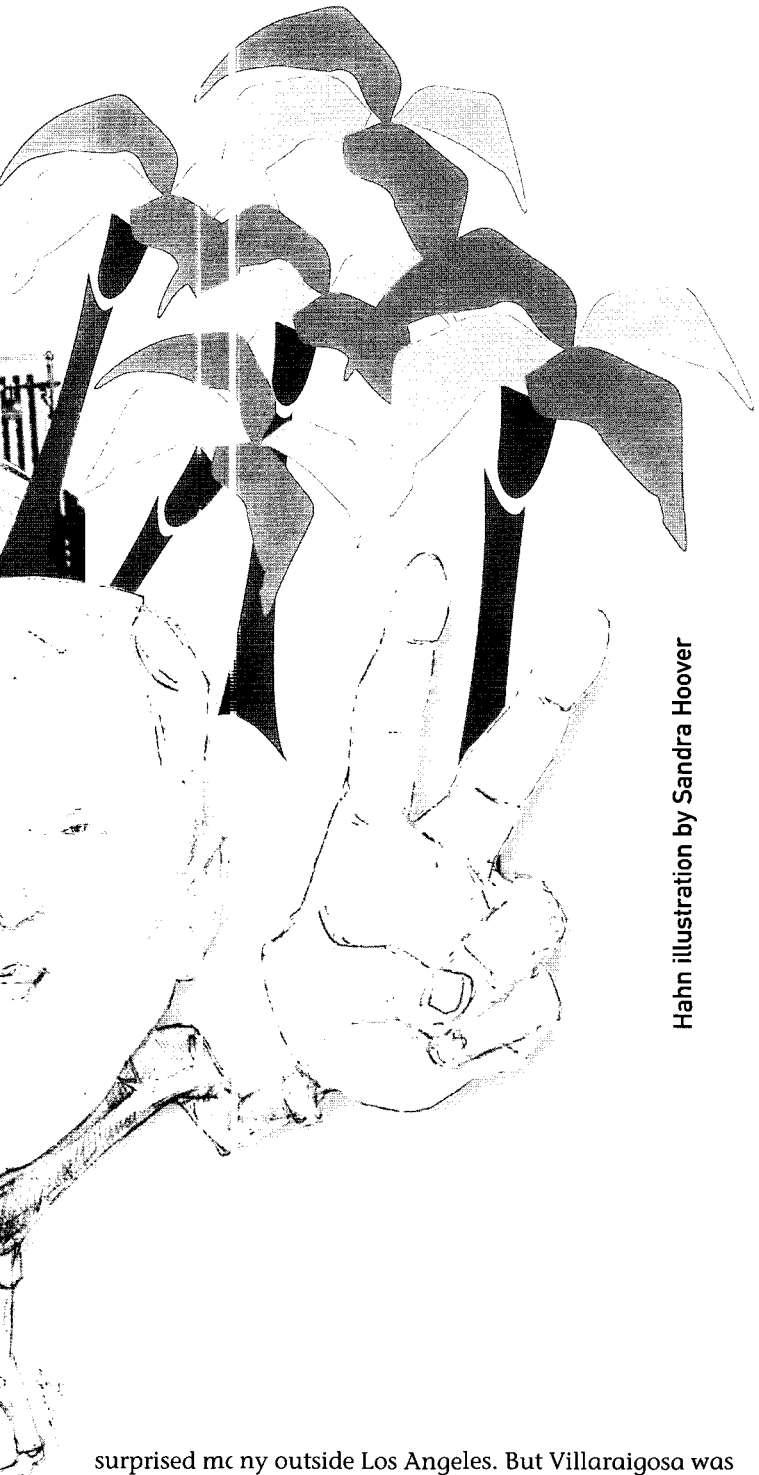

Hahn illustration by Sandra Hoover

surprised many outside Los Angeles. But Villaraigosa was virtually unknown in this city, and Hahn has spent his whole life training for the mayor's job.

As a child, the new mayor cruised the city streets with his legendary father, the late Kenneth Hahn, in search of potholes. His dad, who served a record 40 years on the county Board of Supervisors, catalogued each pothole he came across. Within days, each was repaired.

With a childhood like that, it's no surprise the younger Hahn grew up to be chief executive of the nation's second-largest city or that some folks already call him "Mayor Pothole."

Following in his father's footsteps, this 51-year-old liberal Democrat will make sure the streets are repaired, the trees trimmed and the trash picked up. But he's not expected to be a visionary leader sketching out grand plans to take Los Angeles into the 21st century — as some believed Villaraigosa could have been.

"Jimmy will hit for average," Los Angeles political affairs consultant Richard Lichtenstein said. "He will get on base all of the time. But he won't be a Mark McGuire or Sammy Sosa, swinging for the fences."

Barring a disaster, an average hitter may be just what this city needs because the issues that lie ahead demand detailed planning rather than grand visionary schemes. The new mayor needs to hold the city together amid a growing secession movement born out of frustration over the lack of city services. He has to keep Los Angeles from choking on its own growth. He must fulfill his campaign promise to help the city's struggling schools find new campuses. And he needs to protect public safety while reforming a perpetually troubled police department.

In Hahn's case, he has to do all of this while holding together — and expanding — the crazy-quilt coalition that elected him. For the first time in the city's history, liberal African Americans in south central Los Angeles joined with moderate and conservative white suburbanites in the San Fernando Valley to elect a mayor.

The two sides of his coalition couldn't be further apart on several crucial issues, including the biggest one Hahn will face in the year ahead: secession. San Fernando Valley, Hollywood and San Pedro have each threatened to leave Los Angeles and become municipalities in their own right. San Fernando Valley whites are secession's biggest advocates, while African Americans are its biggest foes, according to a poll by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Hahn tried to please both sides by opposing secession but supporting a public vote on the issue, which could come to a head by November of next year, when San Fernando Valley secessionists hope to put the matter on the ballot.

Secession requires the approval of a majority of voters in the city and in the San Fernando Valley — a high hurdle, no doubt. But the desire to break away from Los Angeles is intense in certain quarters, and Hahn will have to work hard to squelch it.

Fending off secession

"In U.S. history, it is hard to find a mayor who will face a more realistic threat of secession than this mayor faces," Raphael Sonenshein, California State University, Fullerton, political scientist, said. "A million things can go wrong when you're mayor. But you don't want...to wind up like Mikhail Gorbachev by presiding over the breakup of the union."

Hahn's victory in the Valley, coupled with the support of some of the secession movement's leaders, will help him

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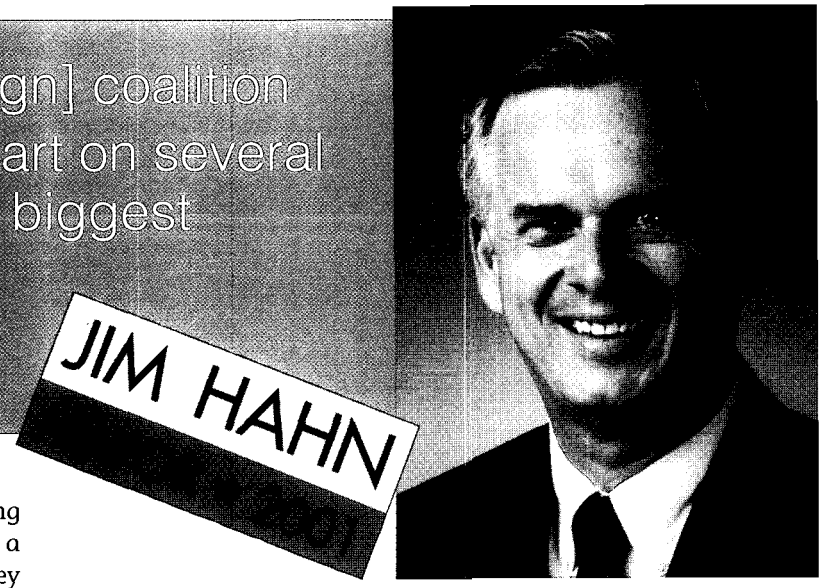

James Hahn took the lead with conservative voters from the Valley.

avoid being a local Gorbachev. But Mayor Pothole is going to have to deliver city services like never before. "Give us a year to show things are changing, and then maybe they won't want to leave," said Hahn.

To that end, the city adopted a new charter two years ago that is supposed to give residents a stronger voice in what happens in their neighborhoods. It created neighborhood councils to advise the City Council. "We do not have a tradition of decentralized government in Los Angeles," said Erwin Chemerinsky, a University of Southern California law professor who was chairman of one of the two commissions that wrote the new charter. "Whether the neighborhood councils will have any meaningful role will depend on how the mayor addresses it."

Hahn has promised to make city departments more responsive to neighborhood needs, and he has the power to do that under the new charter. He also pledged to do a better job of working with the City Council to carry out his wishes than did his predecessor, Richard Riordan. The multimillionaire Republican, who had never before served in elective office, battled with the City Council throughout most of his two terms.

Hahn has the political experience Riordan lacked. Before becoming mayor, Hahn served four years as controller, the city's chief fiscal officer, and 16 years as city attorney. He is cautious to a fault, his critics say. And he seeks consensus rather than confrontation. Over the years, he's developed friendships with most of the 15 council members. Five of them endorsed him, including the council's two Latino members, Alex Padilla and Nick Pacheco.

Hahn will also have a strong ally in his sister, Janice Hahn. She was elected to the council the same day he won the mayor's race. Their elections are expected to quell the secession movement in their own neighborhood of San Pedro. James Hahn, who grew up in south central Los Angeles, lives in San Pedro in his wife's childhood home. His two children go to public schools there, and his sister now represents the area on the City Council. On Election Day, James and Janice Hahn stood outside their San Pedro polling place and joked about the pressure she'll put on him for her south bay district. "She wants me to devote the entire city budget to her district!" James Hahn said. She said: "I want to get the mayor to focus on the waterfront!"

Hahn will have to balance competing demands from throughout the city while also coping with what he considers Los Angeles' biggest challenge—growth. Southern California is expected to gain six million new residents over the next 20 years, or the equivalent of two Chicagos. While the newcomers will be spread across five counties, they will share many of the same growing pains: congested freeways, inadequate housing and little land left to build their way out of their growth.

The Los Angeles basin has the most congested freeways in the nation, according to the Texas Transportation Institute. To ease congestion, Hahn has proposed a menu of nuts-and-bolts basics. He wants more buses, more carpool lanes, more left-turn lanes, "smart signals" that speed the flow of traffic in rush hour and repair of the 25 worst intersections every year.

The lack of affordable housing remains one of the region's most pressing problems but it cropped up rarely in the mayor's election. "There is nothing more important than housing," Fernando Guerra, the director of The Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, asserted. "When someone buys a home, they become more stable and more invested in their community, economically, socially and politically."

Los Angeles gained 1 million new residents in the 1990s and only 120,000 new housing units. A worker must earn two to three times the minimum wage to afford the average one-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles. Because so few do, Los Angeles has one of the lowest homeownership rates in the country. Hahn vowed to seek $100 million in federal and state grants to help pay for affordable housing. He also promised the city would streamline the permitting process and waive fees for developers of affordable housing.

Finding any place to build those new homes, though, could be his biggest challenge. "Sprawl has the hit wall in Southern California," according to a recent study by the Brookings Institution and the University of Southern California. The two-year study found the remaining open land

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is unsuitable for development because it's too mountainous or has been set aside for other purposes, like agricultural preservation. Accommodating growth amid such constraints is better addressed regionally, rather than locally. But it rarely is.

onio Villaraigosa, although the
r in the mayoral race, ener gized
no voters.

Hahn vowed to change that by being an "activist mayor" who works with other Southern California cities and counties. "When you fly over Southern California, you certainly can't see the boundary lines of the cities," he said. "It's clear that we are all part of the solution."

It's about regionalism

On the one regional issue that's come to fore, though, Hahn is adamant. He has already come out against the expansion of Los Angeles International Airport. He says other cities need to carry more of the region's air traffic. "Unless Los Angeles puts the brakes on airline expansion, we will never get people to say, 'Let's use Ontario, Palmdale or El Toro airports,'" he said. "We keep carrying the burden of the region, from Ventura to San Diego, at LAX." Hahn appoints the airport commission and could get his appointees to kill the expansion plans. Doing so would please his African-American supporters who live under the airport's flight path. But it would anger supporters in the business community and construction unions who are counting on the additional jobs and trade that a $12 billion airport expansion would generate.

Hahn faces a similar no-win situation in trying to improve the city's schools. As a mayor, he has no official power over Los Angeles Unified School District. Riordan set a new standard for the mayor by ousting a majority of the school board and replacing it with candidates he chose and helped finance. Hahn, a modest man who drives a hand-me-down sedan from his late father, doesn't have the Riordan-like bank account to mount such challenges. Instead, he's focused on helping the district find new school sites. But even that is certain to pit the mayor against homeowners and local businesses.

The district's campuses are so crowded that 14,000 students have to take buses to schools across town because their neighborhood schools are full. Their numbers are expected to grow to 30,000 by 2003 and to 80,000 by 2008. The district has been reluctant to tear down existing buildings for a school site. Hahn said that may be the only way for the school district to build the 100 new schools it needs.

"There is going to be some pain here," Hahn said. For schools, Hahn also plans to nearly double the number of after-school programs to keep young people off the streets and out of gangs. He's counting on state and federal funds to pay for it, but the state's energy crisis is already cutting into those budgets. Governor Gray Davis, in his April budget revision, proposed eliminating $9.7 million from after-school programs serving more than 36,000 youngsters and parents in Los Angeles and other counties.

Public safety was the top issue for Hahn's campaign, and he's promised to put 1,000 new police officers on the city's streets. Now he must find a way to keep the Los Angeles. Police Department from creating the kind of problems for him that it has for previous mayors. The Rampart police corruption scandal undermined Riordan's popularity in the final year of his term, and, years earlier, the police beating of Rodney King and the riots it later provoked severely tarnished Tom Bradley's legacy. Hahn has already come under fire for not detecting corruption in the police department's Rampart Division. Once the corruption was exposed, though, he won over many police reformers by negotiating a federal consent decree that Riordan opposed.

The decree requires the city track trouble officers and halt racial profiling. It may take the heat off the mayor and shift it to the federal monitor who oversees the reforms. Still, Hahn faces the tricky decision of whether to give the current chief, Bernard Parks, another five-year term when his contract comes up for renewal next year.

Police chief quandry

The mayor appoints the civilian police commission, and it makes the decision on Parks' contract. Whatever choice it makes, Hahn will likely not escape criticism. Parks is African American and remains an extremely popular figure among Hahn's African-American supporters. The mayor's more conservative supporters, though, are troubled by the estimated $125 million the city will have to pay to those victimized by Rampart officers on Parks' watch. At this point, Hahn has said he would keep the chief on the job and, given the intensity of feeling about Parks in the African-American community, that might be the safest bet.

While he weighs the competing interests of those who helped him win the mayor'soffice, Hahn must also reach out to the Latinos who overwhelmingly supported Villaraigosa and still feel bitter about his loss. Many felt their time had come and complained that the city's old guard stole the mayor's office from them by smearing Villaraigosa's reputation with hard-hitting attack ads and mailers. Their charges, however, ignore the old-guard support Villaraigosa did have and the fact that another, more conservative Latino — the new city attorney, Rocky Delgadillo — won on June 5.

Many analysts have predicted Hahn will be the city's last white mayor. But anyone who doubts Hahn's ability to win over the Latino community need look no further than the unlikely coalition that put him into office. It is the best evidence that the new mayor, who learned about potholes and politics from his famous father, knows how to build bridges, one brick at a time.

Laura Mecoy is Los Angeles Bureau Chief for the Sacramento Bee. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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A chat with Harry Low

Nearly one year ago, a retired jurist with an impeccable reputation was appointed to oversee the California Department of Insurance after it was nearly shattered by scandal. How does Harry Low assess the department today, what impact does he feel he has made on its resurrection and does he plan to seek election to the job in 2002?

By Emelyn Rodriguez

Harry W. Low became California's insurance commissioner in September 2000, when Governor Gray Davis appointed him to the $132,000-a-year-post as head of the Department of Insurance. Low, a former appellate court judge, arrived on the scene at a difficult time for the department, which had been rocked to its foundation by a scandal that eventually led to the resignation of Low's predecessor, Republican Chuck Quackenbush, and most of the department's senior management team. As a result, the department was in disarray, rudderless and with its morale crumbling. Low was selected to right the ship.

In a sense, Low is a throwback. Prior to 1990, insurance commissioners were appointed by the governor. That changed after 1988 when voters passed Proposition 103 specifying that the insurance commissioner be elected by the voters at

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Low enjoying a laugh at his confirmation, sitting next to March Fong Eu along with his family and friends.

large. Two years later, Democrat John Garamendi became the first commissioner to earn the job at the hand of voters. He was succeeded in 1994 by Quackenbush, who was re-elected in 1998 before becoming mired in allegations that he improperly settled claims arising from the 1994 Northridge earthquake. He quit June 28, 2000, following a lengthy legislative investigation that exposed how Quackenbush and his minions had used the department for political gain. Davis quickly named an interim commissioner — law professor Clark Kelso — to stabilize the department until a permanent commissioner could be found. The governor ultimately appointed Low to the permanent position.

Born in the back of a hand laundry in the small Stanislaus County town of Oakdale, the affable, soft-spoken Low has had a long and distinguished career in public service. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1952 and three years later earned a law degree from Boalt Hall. Low began his legal career as a deputy state attorney general, then spent 26 years as a judge — his career as a jurist distinguished by appointments from both Democratic and Republican governors. Democrat Pat Brown named him to the San Francisco Municipal Court in 1966, while Republican Ronald Reagan later appointed him to the Superior Court in 1974. Then in 1982, Democrat Jerry Brown elevated Low to the First

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District Court of Appeal where he served until retirement in 1992. He subsequently worked as a private mediator for an arbitration and mediation firm.

Over the years, Low, a 70-year-old moderate Democrat, has built a reputation for fairness and integrity. In a wide-ranging interview, Low discussed the challenges he encountered in taking over the insurance commissioner's office as well as his priorities and goals for the future.

"The message has gotten out on things like free lunches and dinners, gifts and trips. Those things are all forbidden. I've said over and over again we're going to do things according to the rule of law."
— Insurance Commissioner Harry Low

Question: When you first took the helm, in what condition was the Department of Insurance?

Answer: I think it was starting to stabilize. Clark Kelso had been there almost two months, and he started to identify some problems. He had changed some of the key leadership, and he was also willing to stay on for a brief period of time as my chief deputy. But things were still in some turmoil.

Staff morale was very low at that time, although I think it has since been steadily improving. I made many efforts to visit the offices, spend time with the staff and stated in my weekly messages what I'm trying to do. I established a code of conduct with rules of ethics. I then brought in a new internal auditor. The message has gotten out on things like free lunches and dinners, gifts and trips. Those things are all forbidden. I've said over and over again we're going to do things according to the rule of law. We're going to try to do all our enforcement and investigations in a very even-handed manner.

Q: Did you find any other examples of inappropriate or questionable activity in the department?

A: I found in certain places that there were huge backlogs — as much as five years' worth of backlogs in investigations of [insurance] agents or brokers who are errant. I found out that the licensing bureau was taking long periods to approve licenses. I had heard complaints from people who want to be a broker or an agent that it took six months to find out whether their applications were approved. People told me that this is the way it's been for years. So I ordered staff to clean up and assess that backlog and set some priorities on the kinds of cases we'll pursue. And we've made some strides. We've reduced the backlogs to about 28 days [for new licenses]. With regard to online renewals, we can have a 48-hour turnaround. New licenses take longer. Certain types of licenses, like bail bondsmen, have to be checked more closely.

Q: What are your top priorities for this department and what do you see as your role as insurance commissioner?

A: I was asked to restore respect and confidence in the department. The way you do that is to follow the law and enforce the law fairly, impartially and by being accessible and transparent. I have two responsibilities. No. 1 is to protect the consumers. And No. 2 is to ensure stability in the industry so that if we have a disaster [insurance companies] can pay consumers. I also want to see if we can do things better and try new things. Like expand mediation, expand market services and bring in technology. I want to try to do things not just faster, but better. In short, I am trying to be like a good CEO with some management skill.

Q: Give us an update on the status of the Northridge earthquake claims and the re-opening of investigations into insurance companies' handling of those claims. Are people who were underpaid or unfairly treated going to get any money back?

A: There are two aspects of it. One is trying to set aside the settlements [or void certain insurance company settlements arranged by former Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush that resulted in donations to nonprofit foundations whose expenditures have been questioned]. We tried to do it voluntarily and spent some two or three months on it. But it didn't work out, so we've asked the state attorney general to proceed with a lawsuit against the insurance companies. That's ongoing.

The second aspect deals with the statute of limitations that's been reopened with legislation [SB 1899 by Senator John Burton (D-San Francisco)]. But there haven't been a whole lot of people [barred from filing only because the statute of limitations expired] who have made these claims for damages. As far as those who have gone through the Department of Insurance, it's less than 50 cases. But if you include those people who have filed claims through the insurance companies, it's probably in the thousands. There are also [legal] challenges being raised against lifting the statute of limitations that we have to overcome.

Q: Are you planning to run for insurance commissioner in 2002?

A: I'm certainly considering it. For the first four to five months, it's been nose-to-the-grindstone, doing all these things to put the department in some order. I now have what I feel is a kind of a comfort level that a) I could do the job and b) I have a good team, a good staff. And frankly, I enjoy this work. I was perhaps under the erroneous belief that I may [need to] be here at least a year before I had to

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Low talks about his goals for the department and his personal ambitions.

really assess the situation. But I now realize that I may not have the luxury of waiting too long. I still need to focus a little more on upsides and downsides. But I am seriously considering it.

Q: When you were first appointed, you said you weren't going to take any campaign contributions. Is that still the rule?

A: Yes. I have accepted, so far, no campaign funds. I realize that I would be uncomfortable receiving campaign funds from people I regulate or people who have an interest in the outcome of my activities. If I am going to be impartial and viewed and perceived as being impartial, that's important to me...I want to be true to myself. So that has been my rule and I think it will remain that way.

Q: In a previous interview you said, "I don't view myself as a political person." What did you mean by that?

A: Well, I guess in many ways I've been active in the community and I've been in the periphery of some political campaigns. But I don't view myself as someone who has to run for this office or that office, or someone who uses a position as a stepping stone. I have not really been in many campaigns myself. I ran for the [San Francisco] Superior Court but it was a small, local race. And even though I headed up charities, civic groups and community organizations and sat on lots of boards, I would say that fundraising was not my best suit...So when people talk about needing to raise "x" millions of dollars, I raise my eyebrows. And so maybe, if I were to run it would be a pretty bare-bones campaign. (Laughs) Some people are just great at raising money. I just haven't had that skill.

Q: You have been described as "a man seemingly without enemies," and you have a reputation for integrity and competence. But you're also not considered a boat rocker, and some consumer advocates like Harvey Rosenfeld say that you don't have an aggressive record of advocating for consumers. What's your take on these assessments?

A: The first part I applaud. (Laughs) The second part, I suppose it depends on where you stand. When I was on the municipal court for a lot of years, I viewed myself as always supportive of the common folk and the little man. But some people say that's not good enough. I certainly subscribe to the principle that the insurance law has the first responsibility to protect consumers. To do that you have to maintain stability and be fair. And that's the philosophy that I've tried to maintain in this department.

Q: How are you liking your job so far?

A: Being insurance commissioner is a different role for me. Not with the law side and the litigation side of it. But the regulatory side is a little different. So it's a new experience and I'm certainly learning a lot. It's quite enjoyable. Overall, I'm having a good time.

Emelyn Rodriguez is Senior Editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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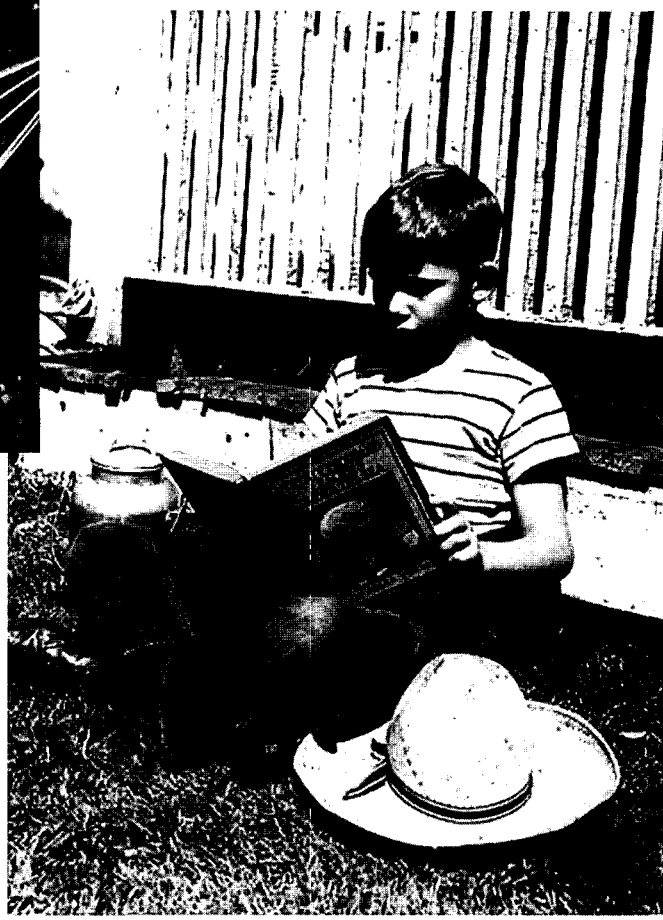


More Essential Reading

Last summer, we unveiled a first — "The Essential *California Journal* Reading List" — an admittedly subjective but carefully crafted lineup of 22 books that we felt captured the breadth and depth of California's rich social, political and economic history. From John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" to John Jacobs' "A Rage for Justice: The Passion and Politics of Phil Burton," the list encompassed what we considered "essential" reading — the best books for understanding the quirky, complex nature of the great Golden State.

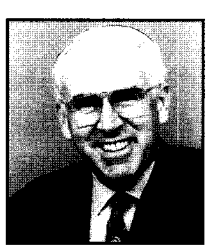
The list proved to be a blockbuster, generating perhaps more letters and e-mails than any *CJ* topic in recent memory. From as far away as Alaska, and as recently as last month, we've continued to receive comments and book recommendations — nearly a year after that first article appeared in June 2000.

So, this summer, we've ordered up a sequel. And instead of tapping our own editorial judgment, we turned the tables, asking 100 of California's political elite to send us their selections. From lobbyists to lawmakers, from educators to environmentalists, we invited those in the know to share their favorite books on California past and present.

On the next few pages, just in time for summer reading, you'll find a sampling of their suggestions, accompanied by brief summaries in their own words. Enjoy the literary journey.

— CJ Editors

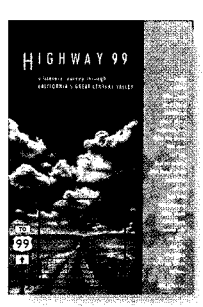
Vic Fazio
Lobbyist, former congressman



"Ronnie and Jesse"
By Lou Cannon
Doubleday, 1969

Covers a great period in history with a focus on the interplay of two political leaders who were foes and yet often worked together.

"Highway 99: A Literary Journey through California's Great Central Valley"
Edited by Stem Yogi
HeyDay Books, 1996



A compilation of articles, short stories, and poems about the great Central Valley — the part of California that many Americans don't know.

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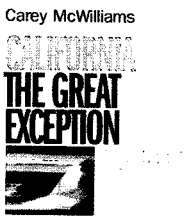
"California Water Atlas"
Project Director William L. Kahrl
Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 1979
(distributed by William Kaufman)

A great book for map lovers who want to follow the water wars. Keep it nearby when you read Marc Reisner's "Cadillac Desert."

Tony Quinn
Political consultant

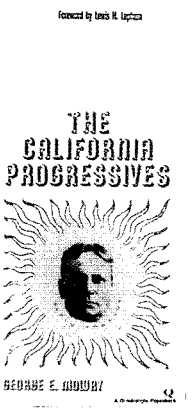
"Rage for Justice: The Passion and Politics of Philip Burton"
By John Jacobs
Berkeley University Press, 1995

Although the author's bias toward Philip Burton and his liberal ways tempers some of the cruder aspects of the Burton career, this is a fine study of old style ethnic politics in California and the Democratic Party's political wars in San Francisco during the 1950s and 1960s.



"California the Great Exception"
By Carey McWilliams
1949 (Reprinted University of California Press, 1999)

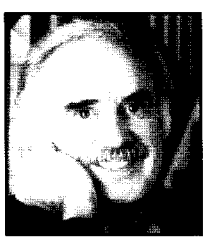
Written by a left wing author, but it is a good look at California in the 1930s and later.



"The California Progressives"
By George Mowry
1951 (Reprinted, Quadrangle Books, 1963)

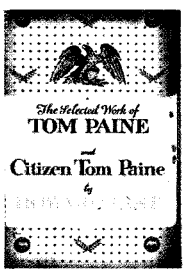
The best study of the Hiram Johnson Progressive era. This book explains our long-standing tradition, requiring that local political officeholders be "nonpartisan."

John Burton
Senate President pro Tempore

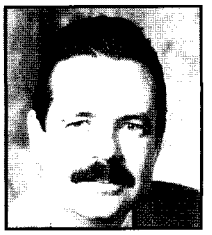


"Citizen Tom Paine"
By Howard Fast
1943 (Reprinted, Grove Press, 1983)

An inspiring story about a true revolutionary who did great things here and in France and who saved the American Revolution in its darkest hour through brilliant rhetoric.

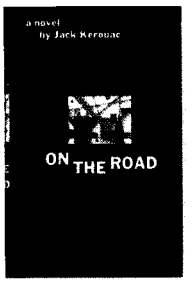


Ray McNally
Political consultant



"On the Road"
By Jack Kerouac
1957 (Reprinted, Penguin Books, 1999)

The bible of the Beat generation with its roots in San Francisco's North Beach literary scene of the 1950s.

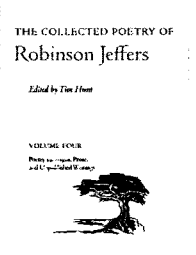


"Day of the Locust"
By Nathaniel West
Random House, 1939

A look at Hollywood's dark underbelly.

"The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers"
By Robinson Jeffers
Stanford University Press, 1988

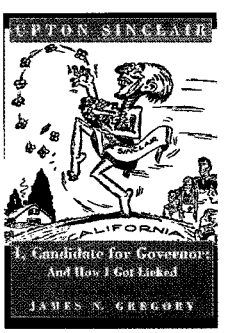
Jeffers wrote his five-volume homage to Big Sur and California's rugged central coast in the early 1900s.



Kim Alexander
California Voter Foundation

"California – A Bicentennial History"
By David Lavender
W.W. Norton & Company and the American Association of Local and State History, 1976

Published in honor of the country's bicentennial celebration, this book paints a loving yet honest portrait of California history. In chapters like "The Unauthorized State" and "Difficulties with Democracy," the author traces the roots of California politics in a straightforward and engaging way. It presents a great context to better understand modern California politics.



"I, Candidate for Governor and How I got Licked"
By Upton Sinclair
1935, (Reprinted, University of California Press, 1994)

Upton Sinclair is best known as a muckraking journalist and author of "The Jungle," a novel about the Chicago meat-packing industry. Sinclair was also the Democratic nominee for California governor in 1934 and wrote this book immediately after losing the race to expose how big money interests conspired to control the

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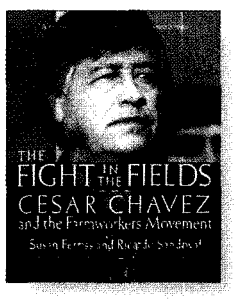
media and wage a successful smear campaign against him.

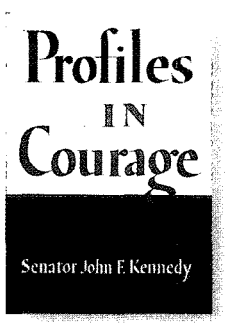
"Roadside History of California"
By Ruth Pittman
Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1995
I love this book about the cities and towns we whiz by on the freeways and roads of California. Ever wondered how Coalinga got its name? Ever been curious about what happened at Port Chicago, or Clear Lake? This book tells the truth about our state's past, the good and the bad. It's a must for any road trip through the Golden State.

Congresswoman Hilda Solis

"The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers Movement"
By Susan Ferriss and Ricardo Sandoval
Harcourt Brace, 1997
An excellent account of a visionary leader's fight for basic human rights. It includes the personal observations and portraits of Chavez's friends and colleagues, including one of my role models, Dolores Huerta.



"Rain of Gold"
By Victor E. Villasenor
Delta Trade Paperbacks, 1991
Many Californians will relate to the struggles and joys this large, Hispanic family faces.



"Profiles in Courage"
By John F. Kennedy
1956 (Reprinted, Harper Perennial, 2000)
Having the courage to stand up and make the right choices isn't always easy, but it is critical for public officials. I recommend this book to anyone interested in political integrity and how our nation is governed.

Lou Cannon
Journalist and author

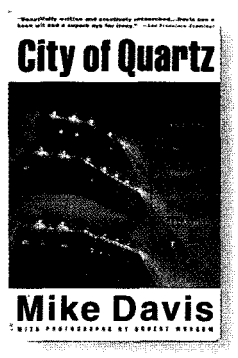
"The River Stops Here: How One Man's Battle To Save His Valley Changed the Face of California"
By Ted Simon
Random House, 1994
The stirring story of rancher Richard Wilson's difficult, but ultimately successful, struggle to stop the U.S. Corps of Engineers from building a high dam on the middle fork of the Eel River and flooding picturesque Round Valley. It's a manual for saving the state's scenic resources.

"Southern California: An Island on the Land"
By Carey McWilliams
1946 (Reprinted, Peregrine Smith, 1973)

Carey combines a radical view of history with an appreciation for the eccentrics of various stripes who were attracted to Southern California. I've read it many times and consult and quote it in my own writings.

"Olson's New Deal for California"
By Robert E. Burke
University of California Press, 1953
The book is a fascinating account of the rise of California's Democrats in the 1930s, with the bonus of riveting sketches of the early careers of important characters like Earl Warren and Sam Yorty who stuck around and made a difference for decades to come. Culbert Olson, the state's first Democratic governor, emerges as a complex, flawed, well-motivated and tragic figure.

Steven Hill
Center for Voting and Democracy



"City of Quartz"
By Mike Davis
Vintage Books, 1992
Deconstructs the powers behind the throne of Los Angeles politics. It predicted the Rodney King riots and social explosions of the cultural landscape in the early 1990s.

"Imperial San Francisco"
By Grey Brechin
University of California Press, 1999
Reveals the history of leading San Francisco families — including the Hearsts and deYoungs — and how they used their wealth from mining, real estate and local newspaper publishing to control San Francisco politics.

"Ecology of Fear"
By Mike Davis
Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt Company, 1998
Sheds light on the myth behind Southern California as the ultimate vacation land and shows how the political

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establishment has ignored sane ecological policy in favor of real estate development.

First Lady Sharon Davis

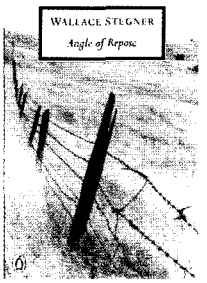
"The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain"
By Mark Twain
1957(Reprinted, Bantam Books, 1983)

This delightful collection of short stories highlights Mark Twain's quintessential humor and is a great book for a hot summer afternoon.

"Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915"
By Dr. Kevin Star
1973 (Reprinted, Oxford University Press, 1986)

This book is from a collection written by Dr. Kevin Starr, California State Librarian, and offers a wonderful insight into the history of our Golden State

"Angle of Repose"
By Wallace Stegner
1971 (Reprinted, Modern Library, 2000)



This compelling novel will keep you turning page after page until you reach the final conclusion.

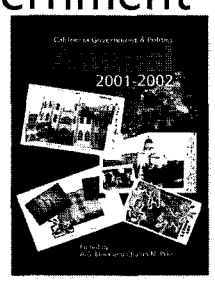
Susan Rasky Professor and Journalist

Nickel and Dimed
By Barbara Ehrenreich
Metropolitan Books, 2001

This is a monumental work documenting in real-life terms the everyday economic struggles of America's have-nots, notably our former welfare recipients.

Available soon!

California Government & Politics **Annual** 2000-01



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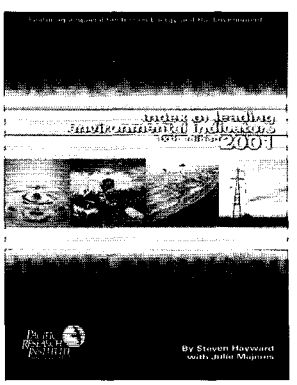

For local environmental data for counties throughout California, visit us online at ***www.pacificresearch.org***.

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Orange County's congressional odd

It was a brisk autumn day at the Reagan White House in 1987. Dana Rohrabacher and Christopher Cox, both young White House staffers, were crossing the alley from the gothic Old Executive Office Building heading to lunch in the West Wing's mess hall. Rohrabacher was a speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan. Cox was in the White House Counsel's office.

Cox asked Rohrabacher whether he'd heard that Bob Badham, a veteran congressman from Newport Beach, was retiring. No kidding, said Rohrabacher. He'd just heard that Congressman Dan Lungren from nearby Long Beach probably wouldn't run for a sixth term.

By the time they'd finished lunch, the two had hatched a plan to run for Congress together.

Christopher Cox and Dana Rohrabacher were two young, ambitious Reagan White House aides, running for Congress from Southern California beach towns back in 1988. Today they are two of Orange County's veteran House members. Although cut from the same political cloth, the political paths followed by these two GOP loyalists have been widely divergent.

By Dena Bunis

"We looked at each other and it was like a real epiphany," recalls Rohrabacher. "The Reagan days were ending at the White House, but the fight was going to go on in Congress. And we had an opportunity to be there leading that fight."

Rohrabacher and Cox won their respective races and entered the 1989 freshman class together as back-bench minority members in a House of Representatives dominated by Democrats.

In many ways, the two are much alike. Both are part of the conservative Republican movement that came into its glory during the Reagan years. Both worked on Reagan's presidential campaigns — Cox as a volunteer and Rohrabacher as a deputy press secretary. Both represent solid Republican districts in Orange County and each serves about half of tony Newport Beach. Neither has had a close re-election race since he entered the House 12 years ago. And they see eye-to-eye on most issues, favoring lower taxes, finding peril in close dealings with China, opposing

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couple

Illustration by Sandra Hoover

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abortion rights and seeking less government regulation whenever possible.

But as much as Cox and Rohrabacher agree on substance, their styles could not be more different.

Cox is the quintessential company man. In his early years, he quickly gained a reputation as a smart lawmaker, someone who always did his homework. When Republicans took over the House, it was an easy call to give their policy chairmanship to Cox, who became the GOP's deep thinker.

Congressmen Christopher Cox, left, and Dana Rohrabacher, far right, join hands with President Reagan circa 1988.

Rohrabacher, on the other hand, is the ultimate maverick who prefers using his seat as a bully pulpit. He has traveled the world, often sneaking into hostile totalitarian countries, from Afghanistan to Burma, to meet with rebel insurgents. He has defied members of his own party, leaning further to the right than most on such issues as immigration.

A study in contrasts

"They're 'Mr. Inside' and 'Mr. Outside,'" says Jack Pitney, a former GOP congressional aide and now political science professor at Claremont McKenna College.

Cox's idea of a good day on Capitol Hill is rewriting the intricate details on a piece of legislation. If it's a choice between that and going to a high-profile press conference called by the Republican leadership, he'll choose working on his bill. Doing a press conference on the Capitol lawn is not likely to land a spot on the evening news, Cox says, particularly in a major media market like Los Angeles, which serves Orange County. "And so you're volunteering to be a Cecil B. DeMille extra in somebody else's press conference."

For Rohrabacher, a good day is standing on the House floor railing against China or some other communist country, such as Vietnam. He'll introduce a resolution condemning this or that, attempting to change his colleagues' minds on an issue by appealing to their consciences. It doesn't matter to Rohrabacher if he wins the day. It's the fight he relishes.

"I'm known for my passion, and that's fine with me," says the former speechwriter. "I know how to work the public, and Chris knows how to work the system."

Which may explain their enduring friendship. "They get along so well," says Pitney, "because they are not in competition with each other."

In fact, on December, 19, 1998, the day that the House voted to impeach President Bill Clinton and former Representative Bob Livingston announced he would not accept the House speakership, Rohrabacher was the first one out the door of the House chambers to begin promoting Cox as the next speaker.

The lure of leadership

In fact, Cox's House career has been peppered with the possibilities of next moves. Twice he contemplated running for the U.S. Senate, once against Dianne Feinstein and later against Barbara Boxer. He took a stab at the speaker's chair when Newt Gingrich stepped down in November 1998 and contemplated another try a month later when Livingston stepped aside.

The 48-year-old lawyer has frequently been mentioned as a dark horse candidate for a vice presidential nomination. And once George W. Bush was elected, Cox's name was in the mix for everything from commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission to a an ambassadorship.

But the career move he's contemplated most seriously is a judicial appointment to the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a job that the White House has been dangling before him.

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Had Cox left Congress, a considerable amount of influence for Orange County would have gone with him.

A lifetime judgeship would have been in keeping with Cox's love of scholarship and the law. Yet when White House officials first came to him, he was torn between that lifetime appointment and remaining in the House leadership and continuing to work on legislation he cares about, such as China and the Internet.

In the end, the decision was taken out of his hands. Cox's chances were killed by a political tiff between Senate Democrats and Republicans over whether a single senator from a nominee's home state could block a judicial appointment, along with the Democrats' sudden ascendancy to the majority in the wake of Vermont Republican Jim Jeffords' defection in late May. California's junior senator, Barbara Boxer, a liberal Democrat, was adamantly opposed to Cox because of his conservative views, particularly against abortion rights and environmental regulation.

Had Cox left Congress, a considerable amount of influence for Orange County would have gone with him. "No question, if we lose either Chris or Dana, we lose a lot of clout," says Michael Schroeder, an Orange Countian who formerly served as state GOP chair and is a close friend of Rohrabacher. Cox is fifth in line in the Republican leadership, a position not likely to have fallen to another Orange County congressional Republican.

The surfer caucus

Rohrabacher has no interest in a Republican leadership spot. Once he reaches his fill of Congress, the former journalist fully expects to return home to California, to write and surf.

"Chris was always focused on trying to go to the Senate or higher up in the government," says Rohrabcher. "While he was thinking about the Senate, I was thinking about surfing."

Rohrabacher, whose Capitol Hill office features a surf board hanging over the couch, jokingly formed the House "surfing caucus" with former Congressman Brian Bilbray (R-San Diego). And the minute his work is done — usually on Thursdays — the 54-year-old lawmaker heads to the airport, flying home to the beach and to his wife, Rhonda.

Cox's life is more centered in Washington, D.C. His wife, Rebecca, is an executive with Continental Airlines. They have three small children, two of whom attend school in suburban Virginia where the Coxes live. He hates the traveling back and forth to his California congressional district because it often means leaving his family behind on the East Coast.

In addition to his duties as chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, Cox sits on the energy and commerce committee where he enthusiastically supported a free-market approach to energy costs and thus far opposes any move to put controls on energy prices. His legislative achievements include passage of a moratorium on new Internet taxes, as well as a major piece of legislation designed to limit securities fraud litigation. His bill won praise from business and condemnation from consumer advocates.

Cox is best known outside the beltway for his chairmanship of the House select committee on China, a year-long effort that culminated in a bipartisan report that chronicled the theft of U.S. nuclear weapons secrets. And last year, he chaired a Republican panel that produced a scathing indictment of the Clinton administration's handling of the U.S. relationship with Russia.

A conservative agenda

Cox grew up in Minnesota, a diligent student who earned his law degree and a master's in business administration from Harvard in the same year. He clerked for a federal appeals court judge in Hawaii and started a company that translated the Russian-language newspaper Pravda into English. After moving to Newport Beach, he became a partner in the law firm of Latham and Watkins. Cox didn't grow up dreaming of becoming a member of Congress. His decision to run, he

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Congressman Christopher Cox

Congressman Dana Rohrabacher

A legislative Don Quixote, Rohrabacher has often take up causes that seemed hopeless at the time but eventually occupied center stage in the House.

says, was an impulse hatched over lunch. It simply didn't seem too far to move from one end of Pennsylvania Avenue where he was a White House lawyer to the Capitol at the other end.

Rohrabacher, however, saw running for Congress as the next logical step in his efforts to promote a conservative agenda. Rohrabacher wrote many of President Reagan's space and technology speeches, and when he entered Congress he had his sights on two committees: international relations and science. He's on both. He has risen up through the committee structure to become chairman of the space and aeronautics subcommittee and vice chair of the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific. Both assignments are naturals for Rohrabacher, whose father was a military pilot and whose family lived in Japan for a time. The science committee also has given Rohrabacher a platform for his outspoken support of the U.S. space program and concerns over Russia's performance as a partner in the international space station.

Rohrabacher attended California State University, Long Beach, and earned his master's degree from University of Southern California. Before entering the political world, he was a local radio and news service reporter, as well as an editorial writer for the *Orange County Register*.

The ardent Republican's devotion to Reagan goes back to his college days. He once camped all night on Reagan's lawn in an effort to talk the then-gubernatorial candidate out of disbanding a pro-Reagan youth group. As Nancy Reagan was attempting to shoo Rohrabacher away, Reagan emerged from the house, shaving cream on his face, and promised to reinstate the group.

A legislative Don Quixote, Rohrabacher has often taken up causes that seemed hopeless at the time but eventually occupied center stage in the House. China is such an example. For years the congressman made speeches about the dangers of communist China, insisting that the Chinese were more aggressive against the United States than backers of increased and normal trade relations with China believed. Rohrabacher's pronouncements were validated by none other than his friend Cox when Cox's China report made a case that important U.S. technology had been transferred to China.

"I'm always pushing the envelope and doing cutting-edge stuff, which by its very nature is dismissed for the first three or four years," Rohrabacher says. "If you keep pushing it, you can make things happen that were impossible a few years before."

Getting local

Rohrabacher's and Cox's styles also differ when it comes to their involvement in local politics.

Rohrabacher frequently gets involved in local races — endorsing candidates for state and city offices. And his involvement has put him in the middle of some juicy scandals. Rohrabacher's former campaign manager — now his wife, Rhonda Carmony — pleaded guilty to misdemeanor campaign violations for her role in a GOP scheme to run a stealth Democratic candidate in the 1995 race to recall former GOP Assembly Speaker Doris Allen. Allen was replaced by one of Rohrabacher's good friends, Scott Baugh, who was pursued by prosecutors for three years in that case before criminal charges were dismissed.

Rohrabacher and his political friends were so angered by the indictment and prosecution of Carmony and Baugh that they campaigned furiously to help defeat then-GOP Orange County District Attorney Mike Capizzi in his 2000 bid for state attorney general. Capizzi lost the Republican primary to David Stirling, who subsequently lost to Democrat Bill Lockyer.

That kind of local political dallying is unheard of for Cox. He steadfastly avoids taking sides in local elections. And even in local hot-button issues, such as the debate over the future of the former El Toro Marine Base, which lies within his district, Cox has carefully avoided taking a position. While Rohrabacher has been a strong proponent of building a new Orange County airport on the former base, Cox has publicly tried to walk a middle road so as not to offend either side in the contentious debate.

"Part of my philosophy of governing is that local decisions should be made locally," says Cox. "The mayor and city council don't need their Washington representative telling them how to run their city or who should sit next to them in the city council."

Back home, activists understand Cox's view but wish he'd be a bit more aggressive and takes more risks. "The rough and tumble of politics is not something he particularly enjoys," Orange County political activist and Lincoln Club member Buck Johns says of Cox. "Dana Rohrabacher has a grand time with it. He just thoroughly enjoys it.

"Different strokes for different folks."

Dena Bunis is Washington, D.C. bureau chief for the Orange County Register. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com**.

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Feinstein, Boxer get a boost from new Senate leader

by Marc Sandalow

From the moment Senator-elect Dianne Feinstein took the stage at a 1992 San Francisco victory party and shouted: "Washington, ready or not, here we come," she and Democratic colleague Barbara Boxer charted very different courses.

Feinstein quickly established herself as a centrist legislative operator, successfully sponsoring measures to ban assault weapons, create new national parks in the California deserts, and bridging the gap with Republicans on such issues as California water and campaign finance reform.

Boxer came into her own after the GOP took control of the Senate in 1994, leading the crusade against Senator Bob Packwood (R-Oregon), who was accused of sexual harassment. She also fought to protect the right to legal abortions and tied the Senate in procedural knots to protect standards for mammograms.

As Democrats take control of the upper chamber for the first time since 1994, Feinstein and Boxer present two distinct paths for party leaders to follow. Democrats could choose to use their one-vote majority to construct legislative compromises *a la Feinstein* to tug the Republican controlled House in a more moderate direction and temper the conservative agenda of President Bush. Or they might use their new powers to aggressively attack the GOP agenda, through hearings and investigations and by passing measures popular with their liberal constituents — Boxer's base — to position themselves for the 2002 election.

So far, the signals have been mixed.

Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota) insists his Senate will be a model of bipartisanship, even as he declared Bush initiatives to drill in the Alaska wilderness, build a missile defense system and expand the nation's nuclear power capacity "dead."

Feinstein sees the change as a chance for Democrats to prove their skill at crafting bipartisan compromises. With just a 50-49-1 Democratic edge, Feinstein said the only way to get things done will be to work with the other side.

"We don't have 60 votes," Feinstein said in early June, referring to the number needed to overcome a filibuster. "I think this is a big structural change in the Senate. It is not necessarily a big philosophical change.

Feinstein's top priority is her legislation to cap wholesale electricity prices. She concedes that it will be an "uphill battle" to push it past a GOP-controlled House of Representatives and a president pledged to veto it.

But a change in leadership on the Senate energy committee gives her measure a good chance to reach the Senate floor, and Feinstein believes that may be enough to apply political pressure on federal energy regulators to act on their own.

For Boxer, the Democratic majority means an opportunity to advance core Democratic issues...

Feinstein said being in the majority also gives a boost to gun-control legislation, a measure aimed at balancing California's water demands and a new formula to distribute Title I education money that would benefit California.

For Boxer, the Democratic majority means an opportunity to advance core Democratic issues that Republicans refused to schedule. Boxer plans to take the lead this summer to reverse Bush's ban on federal dollars going to international family planning organizations that so much as discuss abortions.

As the likely chair of an environmental subcommittee, Boxer is in a position to add sites to the Superfund list and call for hearings into Bush's refusal to strengthen regulations on arsenic levels in drinking water. From her position in the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, she expects to push for ratification on treaties opposing discrimination against women and the use of children as soldiers.

Boxer's list of priorities is long, including a patient's bill of rights, a new minimum wage, closing the gun-show loophole, regulating more chemical toxins and expanding after-school care.

Both senators have good relations with Daschle. Feinstein and Daschle have become friends, sometimes going to movies together with their spouses. Boxer is part of Daschle's leadership team, the chief deputy for strategic outreach, which makes her a part of the party's weekly planning meetings.

"Both of their positions are enhanced," said Michael Meehan, a former Daschle aide who worked for Boxer in 1995 and now works for the Democratic National Committee.

The question now is whose approach the party will embrace.

Contributing Editor Marc Sandalow is Washington Bureau Chief for the San Francisco Chronicle. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

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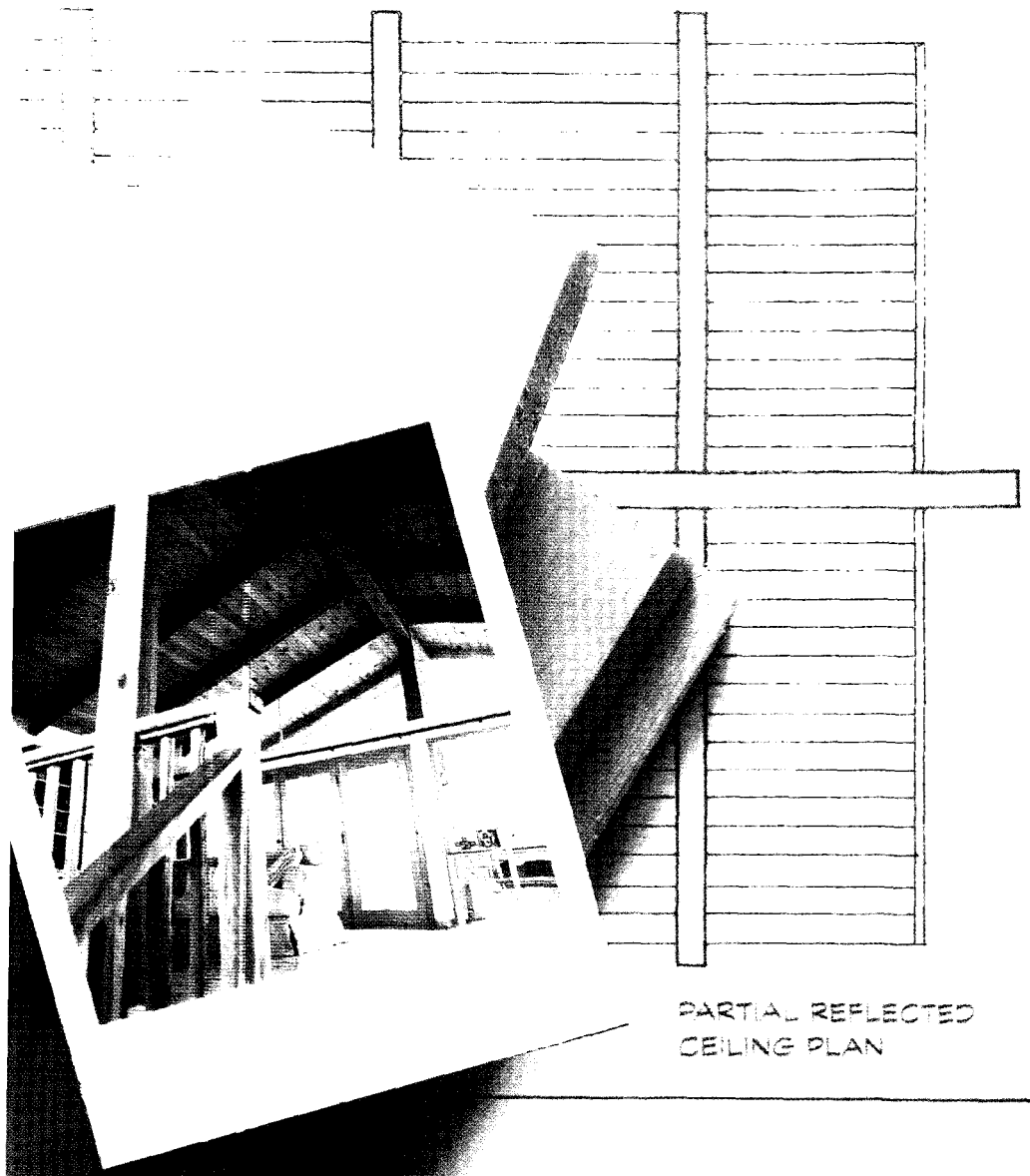

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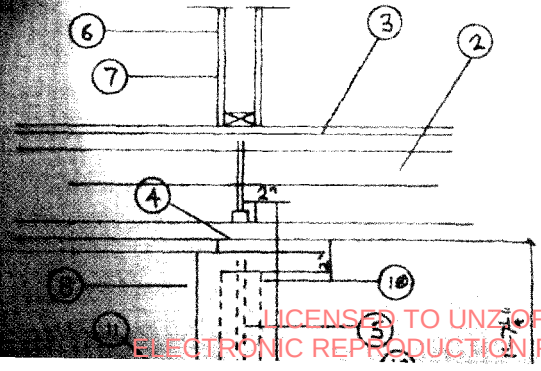

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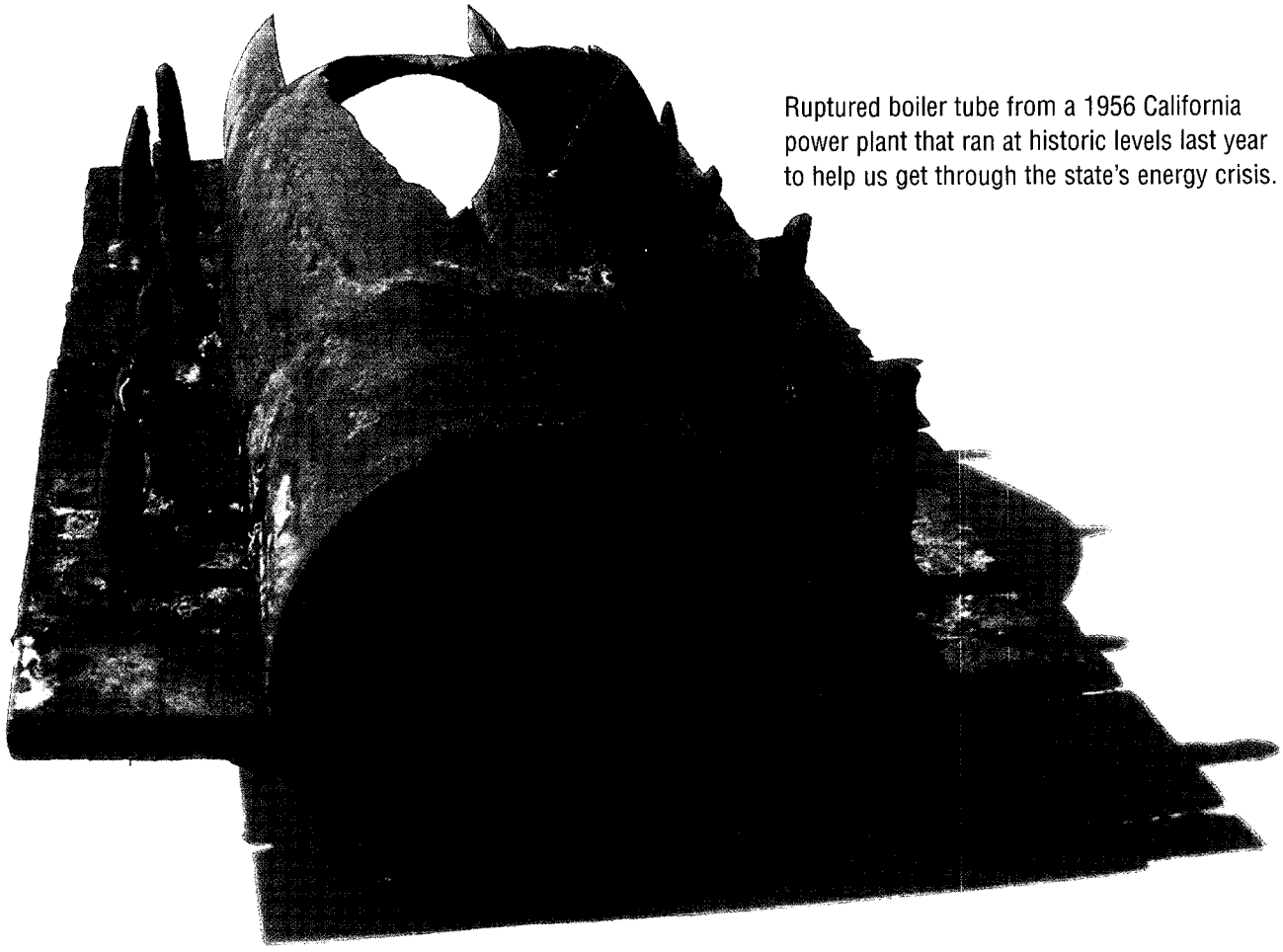

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